THE THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THOUGHT OF GEORGE HERBERT MEAD

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In the interest of simplification, the following abbreviations are utilized in reference to Mead's writings:

Mind, Self and Society	*MSS*
Movements of Thought in the Nineteenth Century	*MT*
The Philosophy of the Act	*PA*
The Philosophy of the Present	*PP*
Selected Writings	*SW*

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INTRODUCTION

George Herbert Mead was born in South Hadley, Massachusetts, in 1863. A graduate of Oberlin College, where his clergyman father held a teaching position in the adjoining theological seminary, he chose for himself a career in the field of philosophy. He did graduate study for a time at Harvard, where he was deeply influenced by the thinking of Josiah Royce and William James. He then went on to Berlin to study philosophy and psychology, from whence he returned to the United States in 1891 to begin his teaching career at the University of Michigan. Two years later, in the company of a young colleague, John Dewey, he journeyed to the University of Chicago, where for the next 38 years he was a popular, respected, and beloved teacher, colleague, and civic leader. In the estimation of Dewey, his death in 1931 was a "philosophical calamity," for it occurred before he was able to give complete and cogent expression to his maturing thought.[1]

In his own character, Mead embodied a largeness both of mind and of spirit. His interests were catholic, and his involvement in these interests was genuine, spontaneous, and complete. He possessed a peculiar gift of perceiving profound dimensions in very common matters, a gift which in large part accounts for the tremendous source of personal and intellectual stimulation which he was to his students and colleagues.[1] His philosophical speculation, from the inception of his career, was rooted in his own life-experiences.[2] The probing antennae of his mind extended everywhere. As he wrote to his wife's parents in 1892:

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[1] John Dewey, "George Herbert Mead," Journal of Philosophy, XXVIII, no. 12 (1931), p. 313.

> ". . . I became interested in philosophy, and the meaning of American life. . . and have been able to follow the connection that has gradually been established between abstract philosophy and daily life."[3]

His bibliography of published articles reflects this existential dimension of his thought, as does the centrality in his thinking of the genesis and character of consciousness and the human self. Mead brought such originality and insight to his speculations concerning this latter problem that he has become a central figure in the fields of social psychology and sociological theory.

The constantly shifting, struggling, and expanding character of his own experience perhaps helps account for the fact that his publication of his thought, although relatively extensive in a numerical sense, includes no major, systematic statement of his philosophical position. In actuality it includes no major work at all which Mead personally prepared for publication in the form in which it was ultimately published following his death. His mind was always on the move, probing for the implications of some new perspective, or straining toward a more adequate explanation of a particular insight. Much of his energy was poured into his classroom teaching, which was a kind of active laboratory of his thinking. Mead was perhaps unaware of the originality of what he was thinking, or he at the very least underplayed it.[1] His colleagues and students, however, were keenly aware of its importance. Dewey, for example, has this to say concerning the significance of Mead's thinking to him personally: "I dislike to think what my own thinking might have been were it not for the seminal ideas which I derived from him."[2] The esteem in which Mead's remarks were held by others is evidenced by their efforts in obtaining stenographic notes of his lectures in various of his courses.

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[1] Dewey's "George Herbert Mead" contains several personal impressions of Mead, the man. See also John Dewey, "Prefatory Remarks," *The Philosophy of the Present*, by George Herbert Mead, ed. by Arthur E. Murphy (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1932), pp. xxxvi-xli; John Dewey, "George Herbert Mead as I Knew Him," *The University of Chicago Record*, XVII (1931), pp. 174-175; Van Meter Ames, "George Herbert Mead: An Appreciation," *The University of Chicago Magazine*, XXIII (June, 1931), pp. 370-372; J. H. Tufts, "Extracts from the Address at Mead's Funeral," *The University of Chicago Record*, XVII (1931), pp. 177-178.

[2] Dewey, "Prefatory Remarks," p. xxxix. See also Robert M. Barry, "A Man and a City: George Herbert Mead in Chicago," in *American Philosophy and the Future*, ed. by Michael Novak (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), pp. 173-192. Barry strongly emphasizes the relationship between Mead's thought forms and life style.

[3] Letter of Mead to Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Northrup Castle, June 19, 1892, Ann Arbor, Michigan. (Unpublished. From the Mead Papers at the University of Chicago.) Quoted by Barry, "A Man and a City," p. 190, n.4.

This observation leads into a brief discussion of the materials with which one must deal in attempting to do anything with Mead's thought. As noted above, the work which Mead himself actually prepared for publication is numerically extensive but lacking in depth, breadth, and coordination. The major portion of his literary legacy has been made available to the public through the collaborative editorial efforts of his fellow teachers and former students. This includes two large volumes consisting for the most part of stenographic notes of two of the courses he taught at the University of Chicago.[1] It also includes the publication of Mead's hastily-written Carus Foundation Lectures, delivered before the meeting of the American Philosophical Society at Berkeley in December, 1930.[2] A fourth volume contains a large quantity of unpublished notes, papers, and manuscripts which were found among his personal effects after his death.[3] Note should also be taken of the service performed by Andrew Reck, who has edited a collection of most of Mead's more extensive journal articles so as to make them more readily accessible to students.[4] These are the basic materials for the contemporary Mead scholar. Although in each case the editors have done a highly commendable job of introducing and organizing the material, the serious student of Mead is nevertheless confronted in his research

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[1] Dewey, "Prefatory Remarks," p. xxxvi.

[2] "George Herbert Mead," p. 311.

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[1] George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self and Society, ed., with Introduction, by Charles W. Morris (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), pp. xxxviii. Hereinafter referred to as MSS. George Herbert Mead, Movements of Thought in the Nineteenth Century, ed. by Merritt H. Moore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936), pp. xxxix + 519. Hereinafter referred to as MT.

[2] George Herbert Mead, The Philosophy of the Present, ed. by Arthur E. Murphy, with Prefatory Remarks by John Dewey (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1932), pp. xl + 199. Appended to the lectures are selections from three preliminary drafts of the lectures, and reprints of two of Mead's published articles. Hereinafter referred to as PP.

[3] George Herbert Mead, The Philosophy of the Act, ed., with Introduction, by Charles W. Morris, in collaboration with John M. Brewster, Albert M. Dunham, and David L. Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), pp. lxxxiv + 696. Hereinafter referred to as PA.

[4] George Herbert Mead, Selected Writings, ed,, with an Introduction, by Andrew J. Reck, the Library of Liberal Arts (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1964), pp. lxxii + 416. Hereinafter referred to as SW.

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with an aggregate of writing which is frequently repetitive, at points obscure, and seriously deficient in generic systematization. The aggregate is worth processing, however, for contained within it is the fruit of what Dewey has called "a seminal mind of the very first order," a judgment with which Alfred North Whitehead has agreed.[1]

It is both curious and unfortunate, in view of the lavish praise that has been heaped upon Mead, that there have been so few attempts to analyze and arrange his thought so that its systematic foundations stand out in some kind of unity and clarity. The fragmentary character of his literary legacy, of course, accounts for some of this inactivity. The task of organization represented here is at least formidable. A second reason why this task has not often been undertaken is perhaps to be found in the similarity of Mead's thought to that of Dewey. Forty years of close collaboration took place between these two thinkers, and the effects of this collaboration are readily apparent in the thought of each. Dewey, in contrast to Mead, was a prolific writer for publication. The ready availability of systematic statements of Dewey's thought has perhaps partially eclipsed the urgency of putting Mead's thinking into more usable form. The popularity of Alfred North Whitehead's Gifford Lectures represents a third factor which partially accounts for the relative inactivity of the philosophical community with respect to Mead.[2] The similarity between Mead and Whitehead is not as close as it is between Mead and Dewey, but it is clear that they both belong to that general orientation of philosophical thinking in which analysis of experience, events, processes, and creativity replaces more traditional concern with eternal laws, substances, essences, and creation. In this orientation permanance is not neglected, but the primal emphasis is upon becoming rather than being, on relations rather than qualities, and on dynamics rather than statics. In a general way, Mead, Dewey, Whitehead, and others all fall into this category of "process thought," and the suggestion is that the more finished forms of the thought of these other men has diverted the attention of those sharing this general orientation from the thought of Mead. This is highly unfortunate, for despite the fact that there are generic similarities among these men, Mead's thinking represents a particular set of concerns and a general perspective which are in many respects unique to Mead himself. Mead's thought represents, at least potentially, a significant alternative within the "process" orientation to the thought of Dewey, Whitehead, and others. The realization of this potential remains a glaring omission within the field of philosophy.

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[1] Dewey, "Prefatory Remarks," p. xi. Whitehead's concurring judgment is quoted on the dust jacket of _Mind, Self and Society_.

[2] Alfred North Whitehead, _Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology_ (New York: Macmillan Company, 1929).

This statement should not be misconstrued so as to suggest that Mead has been ignored entirely. It is perhaps true that his influence has been most apparent in the various social sciences, but there are also a few beginning efforts to deal with his thought from a more generic and philosophical point of view. Most of these efforts, however, are largely expository in character, concentrating upon clarification of various ideas and themes which are recurrent in the

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Mead material. Among the best of these introductory analyses are those by Tremmel, Lee, Victoroff, Reck, and Morris.[1] None of these treatments has yet been accorded any definitive stature. The process of Mead interpretation is actually still in its beginning stages. The rest of the secondary material on Mead is directed more toward specific aspects of his thought, or is of less than adequate quality.

This being the case with respect to the work that has been done on Mead up to the present time, the initial task facing anyone who attempts to deal creatively with Mead's thought is one of analyzing the body of Mead material and presenting in some detail his understanding of the fundamental perspective out of which Mead speaks. He must, in other words, write the major statement of Mead's thought which Mead himself was unable to write. This task is undertaken in the first three chapters of this dissertation, particularly the first. Here the attempt is made to interpret the entire spectrum of Mead's thinking in terms of a small cluster of closely related philosophical notions which appear to be generically foundational for him. The attempt is not so much to state Mead's perspective exactly as he would have stated it (although every effort is made to maintain fidelity to Mead), but it is more an attempt to reveal his basic presuppositions and the manner in which they constitute a perspective or world-view which is a fruitful

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[1] William C. Tremmel, "The Social Concepts of George Herbert Mead," _Emporia State Research Studies_, V, No. 4 (June, 1957), pp. 3-35; Grace Chen Lee, _George Herbert Mead: Philosopher of the Social Individual_ (New York: King's Crown Press, 1935); David Victoroff, _G. H. Mead, Sociologue et Philosophe_ (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1953); Andrew Reck, "The Philosophy of George Herbert Mead (1863-1931)," _Tulane Studies in Philosophy_, XII (1963), pp. 5-51; Andrew Reck, "Introduction," _Selected Writings_; Charles W. Morris, "Introduction," _The Philosophy of the Act_.

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platform for continuing thought. It is quite conceivable--even probable--that Mead himself would not have presented his own statement in just this particular way. It is a treatment of Mead that is deeply analytical, but also deeply integrative. To this extent it may transcend what Mead himself was thinking. Yet it attempts to remain faithful to Mead's own spirit of experimentation and to his refusal to find finality in any particular statement of his position. If the integrative analysis of Mead presented in the following pages brings a degree of novelty to Mead, one may safely say he would have been happy for it. One wonders if there is any way to be more deeply faithful to the fruits of a seminal mind! At the very least, the analysis presented here fixes the author's understanding of Mead in an unambiguous fashion. One hopes that it also represents a step forward in the task of interpreting Mead. Only Morris, in the judgment of this writer, has approximated the type of analysis undertaken here.

If Mead has been neglected by the philosophical community, he has been almost totally ignored by the theological community. Mead himself rejected most of the dogma of the Church, and the restrictive spirit of his puritan upbringing. Yet, as T. V. Smith has shown so well, the leaven of Christianity was alive in Mead's secular spirit, mostly in the social dimensions of his thought.[1] Be this as it may, Mead's thought has not been developed to any great extent from a theological point of view. The only theologian of reknown who acknowledges indebtedness to Mead is H. Richard Niebuhr, who claims him as a philosophical forbearer of his relational value theory, and who adopts much of his theory of the self.[1] There has been a recent surge of interest in Mead reflected in the writings of Peter Berger, Thomas Luckmann, and Gibson Winter, but these men are utilizing him from the standpoint of the sociology of knowledge, the phenomenology of religion, and of Christian social ethics.[2] It may well be that the doing of theology in the future may eventuate in sociological and ethical approaches, but even if this is the case, there is within these approaches both the possibility and the necessity of dealing with some of the more traditional theological categories and problems. This is the task that is undertaken in chapters four and five of this dissertation. Here Mead's thought is self-consciously developed beyond where Mead could or would take it, and this within a theological frame of reference. No attempt is made to transform Mead into a theologian, but every attempt is made to mine the significance of Mead for theological thinking. It is, to this writer's knowledge, the first such attempt to be made. It perhaps contains many of the pitfalls frequently encountered in such first attempts, but hopefully it also contains enough that is of value so that it will not be the last. A theological development of Mead is, in the opinion of this author,

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[1] "The Religious Bearings of a Secular Mind," Journal of Religion XII, No. 2 (April, 1932), pp. 200-213.

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[1] Radical Monotheism and Western Culture (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1960), p. 105, n. 1; The Responsible Self, with an Introduction by James M. Gustafson (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963), pp. 71-79.

[2] Peter Berger, The Sacred Canopy, Anchor Books (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1969); Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality, Anchor Books (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967); Thomas Luckmann, The Invisible Religion (New York: Macmillan Company, 1967); Gibson Winter, Elements for a Social Ethic (New York: Macmillan Company, 1966).

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potentially a major option within the generic field of "process theology," a field which is currently dominated by men who speak out of a Whiteheadian frame of reference. Much work remains to be done if this potential is to be realized, but it is hoped that this dissertation represents a helpful beginning step.

The statement of the potential of a theological treatment of Mead is more the conclusion of this dissertation than its presupposition. The project has been experimental in character from start to finish. It began in what may be termed an "intuitive hunch," without any particular preconception as to where further investigation might lead. It began to take shape gradually from that point on, through research and analysis. It is entirely conceivable that the conclusion reached might have been that Mead's thought did not, in fact, contain much that could be of significance to the theological enterprise. The ultimate conclusion has been quite to the contrary, although the form and direction of the final two chapters was in flux right up until their writing. One cannot refrain from observing that there has been something very Mead-like in the development of this dissertation. If it is ultimately superseded by a further development which is fuller, more penetrating, or which takes off in a different direction, this is both to be expected and to be welcomed. In the interim, however, a beginning has been made.

Chapter I

BASIC ONTOGENETIC ASSUMPTIONS PERMEATING THE THOUGHT OF GEORGE HERBERT MEAD

Introduction

The analysis of Mead's thought which is presented in this chapter is based upon a particular assumption concerning the character of all creative thought. The assumption is that every creative attempt either to impose structure upon or to discover structure within what goes by the term "reality" will exhibit dependence upon one or more basic ideas which permeate and undergird the entire systematic or interrelated complex of the author's work. These ideas, usually few in number, represent that which is generic in the author's thinking--that which continually recurs in one form or another, and which seems to be fundamental to all else that achieves articulation in his thinking. These fundamental ideas may or may not be given precise articulation by the thinker himself. They may in fact largely be hidden from his view because they lie so close to him that they fall into the category of the self-evident. But the point is that, from a functional point of view, what he thinks may upon analysis be discovered in fact to be based upon just these ideas. Without them, the rest of what he says does not really hang together or make sense. They represent the foundation upon which all else rests.

The fundamental role in a man's thinking played by these basic ideas says nothing about whether or not they are "true." The notion of "truth" applies only in so far as the exercise of analyzing these fundamental ideas out may reveal that certain aspects of a man's thought actually do not cohere with what he really thinks at a more basic level. In such a case one could well say that the thinker is not being "true" to his own presuppositions. The real question in the making of this kind of analysis is not "truth" but the discovery of the integrity of a given individual's thought. The content of his perspective on reality is what is sought--the identification of his unique and self-sufficient viewpoint. The truth or adequacy of this viewpoint can be assessed only after it has been identified at its roots as being just that way of looking at things.

To carry the matter a little further, the type of analysis being discussed implies that, should an analysis of the fundamental ideas underlying an individual's thought be evaluated in terms of the truth or adequacy of these ideas, this evaluation itself could be analyzed for a similar set of basic informing principles or ideas. The existence of criteria for evaluation implies also the existence of fundamental reality--notions which grant these criteria their validity within that given perspective. The two sets of fundamental reality-notions involved in such an evaluation may or may not be compatible. If they are not, the adoption of one set over the other is largely a decision reflecting value judgments. The subject matter is how one looks at reality at the most basic level--at the level where things look very self-evident and where alternative points of view appear more puzzling that threatening. There is little left to analyze at this level, for here one is dealing with the basics of all one's discriminative analysis. It is at this level that one either sees the point or does not see it. The "point," whatever it may be, lies within the very being of the one who holds it. It represents the integrity of his perspective, that without which he must change his whole orientation to reality. Such changes do perhaps occur, but it is not likely that they will occur in the mature thought of a perceptive thinker.

The analysis which seeks to lay bare what informs an individual's thinking at this level may be termed an exercise in metaphysical discovery. It is "metaphysical" in the sense that the subject matter of metaphysics is reality in its most generic, abstract, or universal dimensions. What is sought is the identification of the category or cluster of categories which are the most broadly descriptive of reality from that perspective. If the term "ontology" is preferred to "metaphysics," it is of little consequence. The activity involved is still the search for the generic. The term "ontogenetic" has been employed to characterize the categories or ideas fundamental to Mead, because reality from his perspective turns out at base to be a matter of continual creation rather than of continuous being. The result of the analysis is the discovery of Mead's working assessment of the foundations of becoming.

The use of the term "discovery" is valid so far as the description of these foundational notions lies at the end of a lengthy and complicated process of analysis. Most of this analytical process does not show in what is actually recorded in the rest of this chapter. No step-by-step procedure is outlined, perhaps chiefly because no step-by step procedure is available to the investigator who seeks to analyze a body of thought in this fashion. The search for the generic, of course, presupposes thorough acquaintance--perhaps "immersion" is a better term--with the material to be organized. But it also involves a lot of trial and error, and a generous dose of intuition. To this extent the term "discovery" is probably misleading. What is "discovered" is not necessarily what Mead himself actually thought, nor is it necessarily the contemporary understanding of Mead. What is discovered is Mead in the perspective of one investigator. That is the spirit in which this kind of analysis must be undertaken, and that is the spirit in which its results must be utilized.

The question of the "objectivity" of such a seemingly undisciplined method of analysis inserts itself at this point. How can one have conficence in the results of such an analysis, the steps of which are largely hidden from view? May not these results merely be patterns of organization superimposed upon material which taken by itself leads in quite another direction? This question cannot be dismissed merely by reciting the truism that there can be no ultimate certainty in the interpretation of another's thinking. More to the point is the fact that the basic notions abstracted from Mead's thought as a whole can be turned back upon the concrete details of his thought from which they have been abstracted, and there critical judgments may be made as to whether or not what Mead says in a variety of contexts actually illustrates these basic notions. If it does not, the analysis is faulty. If it does, the analysis is at least workable. Such

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comparisons and illustrations are emphasized throughout this chapter. Chapters two and three also represent, among other things, validating illustrations of the results of the analysis. No assertion of ultimacy is made for the analysis of Mead as thus constituted. It is, and will remain, simply one interpretation from a particular standpoint. But every assertion is made that this interpretation is a viable one, and that it can become the basis of a creative system of theological reflection. The analysis of Mead here presented is a description of four separate, yet closely interrelated, universal notions which are interpreted as being foundational to his whole system of thought. They are the notions of relativity, evolution, emergence and activity.

Relativity

A General Statement of the Notion

The notion of relativity may be dealt with at two different levels. At one level it represents a particular mathematical world-conception utilized in modern physics. The name connected with the notion of relativity at this level is that of Albert Einstein. In 1905 Einstein published what has become known as the "special" theory of relativity. It deals with certain differences in spatial and temporal dimensions of objects when their velocities with respect to each other are extremely high. It has also led to the discovery of the tremendous amount of energy contained within the atomic structure of what has traditionally been known as "mass" in a substantive sense, and further, to the equation of mass and energy. In a rather fundamental way, then, Einstein's "special" theory of relativity has led mankind into the atomic age. In 1916, Einstein published his second or "general" theory of relativity. This theory deals with the similarity of gravitational and inertial forces, and has led to the notion of the "curvature" of space and the construction of non-Euclidean geometries for certain situations which Euclidean geometry is not equipped to handle. If the "special" theory of relativity has led modern man into the atomic age, the "general" theory has led to the space age, for successful space navigation is literally impossible on the basis of traditional Euclidean and Newtonian concepts. The point here being made is that the notion of relativity at this level is a highly technical conceptual tool of the physicist as he seeks to understand the characteristic "behavior" of the physical world around him, and to utilize such understanding to exert control over the forces inherent in that world. The notion has a particular applicability in a particular context.

The concept of relativity has a broader applicability at a second level. At this level it functions as a metaphysical category purporting to describe a generic characteristic of all of the reality which comes into the purview of human thought. Its generality as a metaphysical category does not make it irrelevant to particular contexts, but its relevance to particulars is comparatively remote. In contrast to relativity as a theory of modern physics, relativity as a metaphysical category embraces all particular contexts rather than the single context of the physics laboratory. Thus one should expect to find certain areas of agreement between relativity physics and a relativistic metaphysics, but one should not expect every aspect of the physicists' theory to have its counterpart in the metaphysical application of relativity. Two distinct levels of generality are involved, corresponding to the scope or inclusiveness of the investigator's concerns. The metaphysician seeks to account for a broader range of phenomena than the physicist; and to the degree that metaphysics is relevant to the whole spectrum of phenomena, its relevance to particular endeavors such as physics or sociology is rendered less exact (but not less significant). The relativity characterizing Mead's thought in such a fundamental way belongs to this second, metaphysical level of generality, although there will be occasion to note the developments in his thought which are directly traceable to the Einsteinian theories.

In general and descriptive terms, Mead's notion of relativity involves the assumption that the ultimate entities constitutive of what may be termed "reality" are sets of relationships rather than discrete substantial objects. Negatively, this means that in his view there are no indestructable atoms or atomistic entities which serve as the "building blocks" of the universe. Certain types of human experiences have led men to postulate the existence of such building blocks, but, in Mead's judgment, critical analysis of such experiences reveals that such so-called "building blocks" actually function in that fashion only within the confines of particular sets of relationships. When viewed within sets of relationships of a different sort, they may take on quite different characteristics and function in quite a different manner. Again, negatively, the relativity assumed by Mead to be constitutive of reality excludes the notion of an absolute existent of any sort, if by the term "absolute existent" one understands an entity which can be what it is in isolation from all other entities and the power of such other entities to condition the being of the "absolute." There is no place for this absolute in Mead's thought. Only an emergent novelty can be said to be isolated in any sense, from Mead's point of view, and it will be seen that the emergence of something novel is creative of new relationships in which what was novel from a past perspective ceases to be novel in the emerging present.[1]

In more positive terms, then, Mead's universe is characterized by a togetherness which is fundamentally constitutive of whatever is seen to have being within it. There is a mutuality to all things, so that thinghood itself is a matter awaiting its determination by a particular situation within which the relationships constitutive of thinghood are established. All of reality may therefore be described as "situational," and situations owe their existence in part to the selective activity of living organisms. Thus Mead's relativity leads him to view the inorganic and the organic--nature and history--as mutually determinative aspects of a situation rather than as mutually exclusive realms of being. He is always careful to affirm the existence of the physical stuff (or energy) of the universe, but he is equally careful to affirm that what this stuff is--including its spatio-temporal dimensions--is a matter to be determined by the various sets of relationships in which it may be viewed. Stated in other terms, reality is for Mead a social complex. Individual identity, whether of stone or man, is achieved only within a social context of relationships; and, conversely, the society which is reality can only be known through the individual entities which are its parts. Thus Mead's intellectual career is at its base a continuing quest to discover and describe the multitude of relationships in which man becomes who he is and gains the measure of control over his environment that he has. From this rather general statement of what Mead's notion of relativity involves, we now proceed to a more concrete treatment of it as it actually appears in his writing.

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[1] See below, "Emergence," pp. 77-112.

Reality as Responsive to Life

In the year 1896, John Dewey published a journal article entitled, "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology," in which he attempted to "de-ontologize" the concepts of stimulus and response.[1] These concepts, he maintained, have no psychical existence in their own right. They arise in consciousness as teleological interpretations of visual or habitual conduct which has in some manner been disrupted. Both stimulus and response are functional phases of a coordinated act; phases which arise in answer to the lack of the right stimulus to reach a desired end or the lack of a satisfactory ending to some already-initiated act. "Consciousness" of a sensory stimulus or a motor response thus always arises and only arises in conjunction with activity in which that which was previously unquestioned becomes questionable. Consciousness is, in short, a function of the problematic. Four years after Dewey published this article, Mead expanded upon this basic idea in an article of his own entitled, "Suggestions Toward a Theory of the Philosophical Disciplines."[1] As the title suggests, the article as a whole represents a skeletal outline of an entire philosophical perspective.[2] The point of departure for this perspective is Dewey's insight that, as Mead puts it, ". . . all analytical thought commences with the presence of problems and the conflict between different lines of activity."[3] Our interest in this article is at present directed neither toward its pragmatic viewpoint per se nor toward the actual outlines of pragmatic ethics, aesthetics, etc., which Mead presents. Our interest lies rather in the manner in which the notion of relativity is so apparent in the writing; especially so in light of the fact that the publishing date of the article (1900) antedates the first of Einstein's relativity theories by six years.

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[1] The Psychological Review, III (July, 1896), 357-370.

Mead's assumption of the relative character of reality is revealed in his interpretation of what is involved in a problematic situation. To illustrate his point he utilized William James' currently popular illustration of the child and the candle, an illustration which Dewey had also used. A child is confronted with a burning candle. The child has previously burned himself on such a bright object, and he has also played with bright objects. Thus two tendencies to act present themselves to the child; the one to withdraw and the other to grasp. These tendencies mutually inhibit one another, and the child's conduct is frustrated. A problem has appeared. In Mead's interpretation, what is in question at this point is not the psychological condition of the child, but the identity of the object itself.[1] A new situation has arisen in which the object will, in the perspective of that child, take on a new identity. In other situations the object was either something harmful to be avoided or a plaything to be manipulated. It will now, in this new situation, become a new object. It will become this new object as a solution to the problem confronting the child. The child's whole world will be altered by the appearance of the new object that solves the problem. In this new world the meanings previously attached to objects like the candle will have passed away in favor of the new meaning which the candle now takes on. The point is that the identity of the object is the meaning of the object to the child. It has no other identity than the meaning it has in relation to the conduct of the one for whom it has become problematic. This meaning will emerge as the child solves his problem and proceeds with his conduct.

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[1] _The Philosophical Review_, IX (1900), 1-17. Reprinted in _SW_, pp. 6-24.

[2] A perspective to which Mead remained remarkably faithful throughout his entire career.

[3] _SW_, p. 7.

Mead generalizes this simple and rather fanciful situation. He is explicitly clear as to what is at issue. "The question would be what the real nature of the object is."[2] (Italics mine.) It is not only the real nature of the particular object that is at issue, but also, since relations in the world of knowledge are internal, the real nature of the whole world is at least to some degree altered. "To assume the attitude, therefore, of solving a necessary problem, implies a willingness _to completely invalidate one's known world_."[1] (Italics mine.) A new world appears in place of the old; a world in which the formerly problematic object no longer constitutes a problem, and in which the conduct that was brought to a halt in the preceding world is now able to proceed to some consummation.

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[1] SW, p. 6.

[2] SW, p. 8.

It may be objected that this new world is located only in the mind of the child, and that the "real" world has not been altered at all. Mead would reply to such an objection by acknowledging, first of all, that this new world does in fact owe its existence to the experience of the child. He would deny, however, that there is any so-called "real" world lurking somewhere behind the child's experience. What is in the child's mind is a reflection of what the reality actually is. The child is an essential ingredient in the situation which is definitive of reality. It is idle to speculate concerning the identity of that bright, flickering object apart from its relationship to some perceiving organism--in this case, the child. The new object in the expanded experience of that child is the "real" object, and the new world surrounding that object is the "real" world. The relativity operating in Mead's thought is clearly revealed in this example. Objects, and indeed whole worlds, are constituted by all of the _relata_ in a situation. When a _relatum_ of the situation is altered, there is a corresponding alteration in the character of the reality represented by that situation. Thus Mead did not deny the reality of the world which included the shiny plaything, nor did he deny the reality of the world which included the dangerous burning object. His point is simply that these realities are now superseded by still another reality which contains within itself an object which has characteristics of both of the former objects (pleasing and burning) but which is itself something more than either. It will also give rise to conduct that is more complex than simple grasping or withdrawing. Objects, worlds--all that is real--change accordingly as the situation in which they are apprehended changes.

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[1] _SW_, p. 12.

Stated in another way, Mead asserts that all living forms exercise a determining power in the establishment of reality. In any situation of which living forms are a part, the identity of any object in that situation is as dependent upon the selective activity of the living organism as it is upon the "stuff" of which the object is constructed. There is a mutuality involved. The organism and that which transcends the organism together comprise a situation. Within this situation the two are mutually determinative of each other. Identity is a compound of life form and environment. Thus in a later work Mead writes:

> The nature of environment answers to the habits and selective attitudes of organisms, and the qualities that belong to the objects of the environment can only be expressed in terms of sensitivities of these organisms.[1]

This may be illustrated by utilizing one of Mead's favorite examples. A particular quantity of cellulose (a two-by-four, say) is in the situation of mutual determination with a human being a structural component of a house; but in the situation with a termite that "same" volume of cellulose is a long-term banquet. In both cases the identity of the object is its objective or real identity, even though the two identities are different from one another. The difference lies in the selective activities of the living organisms, the one being a man and the other being a termite. Each selects a different environment, although, abstractly speaking, these environments contain the "same" two-by-four. Mead's point is that such an abstraction obscures a fact of fundamental importance, namely, that two very concrete and very different realities are involved. As he succinctly puts the matter elsewhere: ". . . objects have different natures in so far as they exist in different environments."[1] Similarly: "The world is evidently a different affair for the plant and for the animal, and differs for different species of plants and animals."[2] The selective activity of any living form, whether that form is a plant, an animal, or a man, is in part constitutive of objective reality.

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[1] PP, p. 24.

The whole matter may be stated from a different angle in terms of the meaning of an object. The point being made is that the identity of an object includes its meaning, and that a meaningless object is a contradiction which falls outside the limits of both rational discussion and practical conduct. At its most general level, a "meaning," in Mead's nomenclature, is a response relation between some form of life and an object in the environment of that living form.[1] The emergence of a meaning out of a social process or community existence is a rather involved matter which will be examined in detail in chapter two. Our interest at this juncture is more general. The meaning of an object is the response of the living form to it. For instance, the meaning of food is to eat it. There would be no food at all if there were no organisms to digest it.[2] Now the response of the organism to the object (the meaning of the object) is not mechanical. The organism would not invest the object with the meaning of food if the organism did not possess a digestive system which requires food. Nor would the meaning, "food," be invested in an object if that object did not represent something that could in fact be utilized as food. The response or meaning is selective. The object is what it is *for* that organism, or more accurately, for that community of organisms for which it has meaning. Thus Mead concludes:

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[1] PA, p. 543.

[2] PP, p. 38.

> . . . any given biological organism is in a way *responsible for the existence* (in the sense of the meanings they have [sic] for it) of the objects to which it physiologically and chemically responds.[3] (Italics mine.)

The food object is a *food* object because it comes into the experience of the organism with the meaning of food. That is, the organism "knows" how to respond to it--by eating. The meaning of the object, which is to say the eating function, is inextricably bound up with the very "being" of the object. The object actually comes into being in response to the need of the organism.

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[1] *MSS*, pp. 75-82. [2] *MSS*, p. 77. [3] *MSS*, p. 77.

This is not to deny what is for Mead a perfectly obvious fact, namely, that the object is in some sense "there" apart from the experiencing organism. The two-by-four, to extend our rather whimsical illustration, is in some sense "there" whether or not it is apprehended by a termite in the act of eating it. But the point is that the "thereness" of the two-by-four is totally irrelevant to the termite until it in some way acquires meaning for the termite. There is no "two-by-four-in-itself" which can come up for valid consideration in Mead's fundamental view. Only those objects can come up for consideration which have been experienced, which have acquired a meaning of some sort, which have been "placed" in the conduct of an organism or a community of organisms. There is a mutuality involved in the identity of all objects, so that organism and object respond mutually to each other and thus mutually determine what each shall be in the segment of reality under consideration. Only those objects that have meaning, that the organism "knows" what to do about, can be said to have being within the perspective of that organism. This is not to deny that there may be further realities, quite different in kind from the reality of any given type of organism. As Mead sees it, this is quite clearly the case. But this very state of affairs simply confirms the basic relativistic point being made. Such further realities there may be, but until there is mutuality established between them--until participants in one reality learn the meanings (proper responses!) of the other reality--each reality remains totally undiscovered and unknown by the other. There is thus no room in Mead's view for the classical notion that each object has its own nature everywhere and for all times, and that appearances to the contrary are due to faulty perception. Mead sums up his view at one point by saying:

> Metaphysically, *things are their meanings*, and the forms they take on are the outcomes of interactions which are responsible for the appearance of new forms, i.e., new meanings. In a single phrase, the world is ceaselessly becoming what it means.[1] (Italics mine.)

In this view, the nature of an object is responsive to all other objects with which it is in relation and is especially responsive to life.

It would be missing Mead's point entirely if one were to divide up reality between that which is objectively given in nature and that overlay which is placed upon nature by the sensitivities of various life forms. This "bifurcation" of nature between the primary qualities of matter and the secondary qualities of animate sensitivity ignores something which is for Mead an obvious fact, namely, that the sensing organism itself belongs to that aspect of nature which, in the contested view, is called "primary."[2] Mead looks for a more unified description of objects in their relationship to forms of life. In the view he propounds, the meaning which an object acquires in a situation belongs to "nature" as much as the spatiotemporal dimensions of the object.[3] In fact, spatiotemporal dimensions are only discernable through meanings and the implications of these meanings, and to speak of the spatiotemporal dimensions of that which has no meaning (no place in the conduct of the speaker) is to speak with a total lack of sense.

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[1] *PA*, p. 515. [2] *PA*, pp. 18-21, 357-360. [3] *MSS*, p. 78n.

Reality Exists in Perspectives

It is now appropriate to introduce Mead's concept of a "perspective." The preceding paragraphs seem to indicate that reality is for Mead composed of various segments, and this is in fact the case. The basic segment of reality within which objects and a living organism achieve their definite identity or being is called a perspective. "The perspective is the world in its relationship to the individual and the individual in his relationship to the world."[1] "World," here, may be taken to mean the indefinite number of elements which may possibly become a part of the environment of the individual life form. Every such individual life form, in the course of its conduct, "stratifies" the reality surrounding it into a definite structure. This stratification takes place from the point of view of the individual form, hence the term "perspective." A perspective is thus a selected portion of possible reality which, by its inclusion and exclusion of certain elements, marks the determinate limits of the environment of the life form in question. This perspective is reality in so far as this particular life form is concerned.

The perspective is not reality in its totality, for it is but one of a plurality of perspectives. But the fact that an individual perspective is not the whole of reality--that it is rather a selected stratification of reality--does not detract from the fact that the perspective is a reality in the true sense of the term. "Psychologically, the perspective of the individual exists in nature, not in the individual."[2] The perspective is objectively "there" in nature,

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[1] PA, p. 115.

[2] PA, p. 515.

"nature" being understood as the sum total of objective reality. The organism is operative in a selective fashion in the establishment of a perspective, but the perspective is neither existent only within the organism nor does the perspective find itself bifurcated between that which is spatiotemporally there as matter in motion and that which is provided by the organism. The organism is merely a point of reference within the perspective, and both organism and perspective come into being together.[1]

Meanings arise within perspectives. A meaning has validity only within the perspective in which it has arisen as a meaning. If a meaning is to be shared, those among whom it is to be shared must belong to the same perspective. If percipient forms ("percipient" here indicates the selective power of any life form to determine its environment and thus to create meanings) belong to different perspectives they may share meanings only if two conditions are met. The first condition is that the different perspectives are part of a larger perspective held in common, such as the garden perspective which embraces the perspectives of both the plant and the insect. The second condition is that the percipient form must be able to place itself in both perspectives as they intersect.[2] Mead found the uniqueness of the human individual in this capacity to place himself in different perspectives so as to share and relate meanings.[3] The means by which such sharing takes place, and the importance of the sharing of meanings, will be developed in chapter two.

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[1] PA, pp. 107, 110-111, 183.

[2] PA, p. 184.

[3] PA, p. 182.

The relativistic universe of Mead is thus comprised of a plurality of perspectives, each discrete in its own right, yet each also intersecting other kinds of perspectives. As Mead puts it:

> The natural order is an organization of perspectives. We have to recognize that these perspectives exist in their relationship to organisms. Process must be preserved as an ultimate part of reality. How the process appears depends upon the position of the organism from whose perspective it is reported. . . . It is my opinion that you have to recognize not only the organism but also the world as having its reality in relation to the organism. The world is organized in relation to each organism. This is its perspective from that point of view. Reality is the total of such perspectives.[1]

Reality is perspectival in character. It has exactly those dimensions which the individual form is able to call forth in it by placing himself in an ever-increasing variety of perspectives. Each of these perspectives is real. Abstractly speaking, there is an infinite number of them, and none is to be considered as ultimately the "correct" one.[2] A perspectival universe must simply be accepted as it is. Perspectives do not refer to any absolute behind or beyond the plurality of perspectives that are apparent to us. There is no appeal beyond an individual perspective, except to yet another perspective.[3] As Mead puts it in one place:

> All that we have is an indefinite number of perspectives. . . . That is the reality of the world: it is an organization of the perspectives of all the individuals in it. And every individual has something that is peculiar to himself.[4]

This final sentence concerning the peculiarity of each individual anticipates subsequent discussion. At this point it is sufficient to note that the indefinite number of perspectives comprising the perspectival universe are not static entities. They are grounded in the conduct of living and selective forms, each with its individual differences. These individual differences are expressed in the selective activity of the form in question, and to the extent that this is the case, perspectives are dynamic and living. It is against this background that Mead describes a perspective as, "the continual relationship of a structure of nature which involves change in its maintenance."[1] The contours of the perspectival universe are in continual flux.

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[1] MT, p. 315.

[2] PA, p. 99.

[3] PA, p. 119.

[4] MT, p. 413.

The Influence of Albert Einstein

The preceding discussion of reality as perspectival in character reflects a development or extension of relativity in Mead's thought beyond the kind of relativistic thought exhibited in his article on the reflex arc concept. In the earlier stages of his thought as represented by this article, Mead had not completely transcended the notion that nature was to some extent bifurcated between matter in motion on the one hand and the selective activity of a life form on the other. This was not overtly apparent in his writing, but from a later vantage point in his career he began to call the kind of relativity he had been describing earlier "psychological" or "environmental" relativity.[2] The difference lies in the tightness or completeness of his relativistic description. In the preceding paragraphs the point has been made that different perspectives are not partial representations of what might be called "true" reality, but that each of these perspectives is in itself a reality and does not point to anything beyond itself of which it is merely a partial representation. In other words, there is no ding-an-sich of which a perspective is but an appearance. Mead's earlier relativity did not entirely exclude this sort of interpretation. It was the publication in 1906 of Albert Einstein's "special" theory of relativity which enabled Mead to press to its fullest implications the fundamental relativistic view he had been operating with all along.

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[1] PA, p. 118.

[2] PA, pp. 250-251.

Mead's earlier writings may be described as representing a Newtonian view of relativity in that they left unquestioned the so-called "primary" characteristics of a physical object. That is, while on the one hand Mead spoke of a succession of situations in which the burning candle achieved a different identity, he did not, on the other hand, question the assumption that the candle was the "same" in all these situations with respect to its dimensions of mass and space. Those aspects of the candle, at least, seemed always to be the same. Or, to take an example which turns upon the intersection of different perspectives rather than the historical succession of perspectives, the two-by-four may be an item of structure in a house or an item on a termite's menu; but in both cases the assumption seemed to be that it weighs so much, is so long, so wide and so deep, and stands there in the corner. The general assumption, more implicit than explicit, is that the dimensions of a physical object's mass and spatiotemporal location remain constant in all the perspectives stratifying that object, regardless of other differences appearing among these

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perspectives. There is a "backdrop world" of such objects which retain their spatiotemporal characteristics and relations without being affected by the particular point of view from which they are apprehended. Such is the Newtonian world view which is unchallenged in Mead's earliest writings. Relativity in this view is not a fundamental principle. It obtains only with respect to the changing character of the selective conduct of life forms, and has no impact upon the dimensions of solidity, size and location. These remain absolutes.

Mead was quick to see the implications of Einsteinian relativity for his thought. Under the impact of Einstein's special theory, Mead radically generalized the notion of relativity which already played such a fundamental role in his thought. Prior to Einstein, Mead dwelt upon the manner in which the identity of an object, its "thatness," comes into being in a situation which is a part of a particular perspective. After Einstein published, Mead extended his notion of the situational identity of an object beyond its "thatness" so as to include the dimensions of "where," "when," and "how much." It becomes impossible to interpret Mead's work so as to include a "backdrop world" or ding-an-sich. He is very explicit about this point in a manuscript entitled, "The Experiential Basis of Natural Science."[1] A few of the more pertinent passages follow:

> What the doctrine of relativity has maintained is that the space, time, and mass characters are not identical in the different situations, so that the object that is there may not, strictly

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[1] PA, pp. 215-268.

> speaking, be identified with the objects in the different situations but becomes an object in its own situation, if it is subjected to reflective analysis, and can only be brought into relation with the other objects through correlation.
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> It is this which distinguishes a thoroughgoing relativistic analysis from the psychological analysis . . . .
>
> The object that is there disappears in the analysis of relativity, except in so far as it can be stated in terms of events spatiotemporally extended and in the formula for the translation of the space-time distances of these events from one another from one consentient set to another. . . .[1]
>
> With the Newtonian object identified with the object that is there, the psychological analysis seemed to reveal a reality of this object that was universal and absolute. . . . With the analysis of relativity the object that is there returns to its normal position in the situation determined by the individual and his environment.[2]
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> . . . .
>
> The development of a scientific concept which is a principle of organization within a process rather than a set of common marks which belonged to the Newtonian object has weakened the value of the Newtonian object as that with which scientific knowledge deals, and relativity has given it the coup de grace.[3]

Thus the publication of Einstein's special theory led Mead to generalize radically the relativistic posture he had already taken.

This represents quite a development in Mead's thought, but not, I think, a disjunctive turning point. The notion of relativity had always been fundamental to him, and Einstein simply aided him in seeing its implications for the physical world per se. The discovery of the relativity of the space, time, and mass characteristics of objects did not force Mead to abandon his belief in a world that is "there" independently of its being perceived by man or some other life form, but it did enable him to realize how indeterminate this world is apart from its being fixed in a particular perspective.

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[1] PA, p. 253. [2] PA, p. 254. [3] PA, pp. 257-258.

Things are replaced in his thought by situations in which things may become, and the differences between the situations in which things achieve thinghood are seen to be highly significant. All this serves to intensify the importance in his mind of the ability to become a part of more than one situation, for the comparability of situations and all they contain depends on such an ability.[1] Mathematically this takes place through transformation formulas. Psychologically it takes place through the ability of human beings to take the role of the other. But in both cases, if the transformation or role-taking is not undertaken, one is literally confronted by different worlds!

The key to Einsteinian relativity, in Mead's interpretation of it, lies in the discovery of the importance of time in the determination of the physical world.[2] It would be an overstatement to say that time was unimportant in the Newtonian world view, yet it is legitimate to say that it played no fundamental role. Physical things were assumed to have a single identity for all observers, and the history of change in a physical thing was assumed to be identical for all observers. The Newtonian world, as has already been noted, was assumed to be there with its fixed coordinates, and all one had to do was plot the coordinates of changes or motions as they took place and he would have before him a true picture of reality. But Einstein changed all this. In the Einsteinian view, all objects are in a state of motion relative to each other. This in itself does not shake the Newtonian view so long as these motions may be charted upon a changeless grid. Einstein, however, denies that there is any absolute standpoint among the multitude of bodies in motion from which such a grid could be constructed. One body in motion is as good a viewpoint for such a construction as another, in his view. A Newtonian might ask at this point what difference that fact would make, supposing that it were actually the case. Would not any of the moving bodies represent an adequate standpoint from which to plot the location of all others? This question touches the heart of the difference between the two world views, as Mead interprets them.

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[1] PA, p. 216.

[2] PA, pp. 231-233, 289, 549-605.

The velocity of light is finite. It has been determined to be approximately 186,000 miles per second, but the exact figure is of less philosophical significance than the simple fact that it is finite. The finitude of the speed of light leads inescapably to the conclusion that an interval of time passes between the moment a ray of light is reflected from an object and the moment it strikes an observer's eye. That interval represents the length of time the light takes to travel the distance between those two points, and it will vary in direct proportion as that distance varies. Once this state of affairs is accepted, the conclusion follows that when two observers observe the same object, they observe it at different times unless they are equidistant from it. If one is further from the object than the other, he will be seeing it at the same time as the other according to the arbitrary Greenwich standard, but he is seeing it as it was at an earlier time than the other sees it because it took the light longer to get to him. Conversely, if we assume the light rays left the object simultaneously, the second observer will see the object earlier than the first, by Greenwich standards, because the light will take less time to reach him due to the shorter distance involved. When one reflects upon the relative motion of the object and the observers, and upon the fact that changes do take place as time passes, this time interval becomes tremendously important. The assumed simultaneity of the Newtonian world falls to pieces. Serious questions may be raised whether the two observers are seeing the "same" object or not!

In any case, at least the temporal configurations of the "worlds" of observers not equidistant from the events they are observing will be different. An illustration may help clarify this statement. Let us assume, for the sake of illustration, that we have an observer stationed upon a space platform approximately half way between the earth and its sun, and another observer stationed upon the earth. The watches of the two observers are synchronized, each showing the time to be twelve o'clock noon. As the watches register noon, a cataclysmic event occurs. The sun becomes a super-nova! Two minutes later, at 12:02, a gigantic thermonuclear explosion takes place upon the earth. At least this is apparently the sequence from the hypothetical vantage point from which this illustration is being composed. But let us compare the temporal configuration of the worlds of the two observers. It must initially be noted that it takes a ray of light approximately eight minutes to traverse the distance between the sun and the earth, and approximately four minutes to reach the space platform from either the sun or the earth. With this in mind we may reconstruct the worlds of the two observers as follows. For the spaceman, at 12:04 the sun's light flares up in intensity (the light bearing witness to this having taken four minutes to reach the space platform from the sun). At 12:06 the spaceman witnesses a further catastrophe, the terrestrial thermonuclear blast (the light again having required four minutes to bring its report). But from the perspective of the earthman, the sequence is quite different. At 12:02 he witnesses the thermonuclear explosion (being for all practical purposes contemporary with it), and it is not until 12:08 that he is able to note the new condition of the sun. Thus the worlds of our two observers both contain the same events, but in reverse sequence.

The Einsteinian point is that the sequence is entirely dependent upon the observer's point of view, and that it is both impossible and meaningless to attempt to establish which point of view is the "correct" one. Mead agrees in general with this evaluation (with certain reservations subsequently to be discussed), and emphasizes that the sequence of events in each case is really there as an objective stratum of nature. The two worlds exist side by side as real worlds, real perspectives, neither of which may lay claim to be "more real" than the other. And reality, as has been previously noted, is the totality of such disparate perspectives.[1]

The situation is further compounded in difficulty by the fact that temporal differences in what was previously felt to be simultaneous are not the only resultants of the Einsteinian theory. According to that theory fluctuations in the velocities of objects in motion with respect to each other result in fluctuations in the size and density of these objects. This aspect of Einstein's special theory is more highly technical and less easily illustrated than the aspect discussed in the previous paragraph. Since it is not the purpose of this dissertation to describe Einsteinian physics, we will content ourselves with the notation that the Einsteinian world view not only relativizes the temporal sequence of events, but it relativizes their spatial dimensions as well.

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[1] See above, p. 30.

But why are such fluctuations in the spatiotemporal dimensions of objects not more readily experienced in everyday life? One might assume that if the true character of reality is that it is an organization of perspectives, each of which is distinguishable in some of its aspects from the others, this fact would be accepted among men as commonplace. Instead, the Newtonian world in which all objects enjoy an absolute identity and are simultaneously in place and undergo a temporal succession that is common to everyone seems to be accepted by most men as a commonplace. The answer to this question lies in the fact that the differences in spatiotemporal dimensions that are resultant from the finitude of the speed of light and differences in relative velocities are not readily apparent in common, everyday experience due to the relatively small distances and velocities involved in that sphere. The differences are large enough to be measured by scientific experiment, however, and this fact provided the chink in the armor of the Newtonian world view which allowed Mead to thrust to its furthest extension the notion of relativity which was so readily apparent to him in other areas of experience. Thus Mead affirms:

> The fundamental fact in the spatially and temporally extended world is that what event succeeds another event is not determined by the nature of spatiotemporal extension. In other words, we have to look for the laws of change outside the geometry of a spatiotemporal world. These laws are empirically deduced from the behavior of the material objects that occupy the events. Furthermore, the order of the succession is not absolutely determined. It depends upon a point of reference.[1]
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> . . . all extension is temporal as well as spatial, and there is therefore no space that does not pass. . . . The separation of time and space belongs to the perceptual situation or perspective. Place ourselves outside it, and the permanent field of the spatial world itself is flowing, and only from another locus standi can its temporal passage be assessed.[2]
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> . . . .
>
> . . . the universe is made up of passing events which fall into different perceptual, or spatiotemporal, situations that determine their objects. What the theory of relativity has elicited is that this holds even of the spatiotemporal character of objects in the perceptual world.[3]
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> . . . .
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> There exist, then, objective worlds which are relative to individuals. . . . Abandoning an absolute space, there are no absolute dimensions and physical characters of objects.[4]

Older cosmologies had divided the determination of the world into primary qualities which belong to the objects in themselves and secondary qualities which are superimposed upon these objects by sentient beings. In Mead's relativistic cosmology the influence of a sentient being upon its environment, which he calls "logical" determination, is extended right into those aspects of an object which had been considered to be independent of such influence. But conversely, the "logical" determination of a living form is always exercised in concert with the "causal" determination that the environment exercises over the life form. Both of these types of determination are necessary to the determination of the perspective, which is to say, the reality.[5]

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[1] PA, p. 581. [2] PA, pp. 592-593. [3] PA, p. 605.

[4] PA, pp. 168-169. See also PA, p. 118. [5] PA, pp. 114-118.

Relativity and Consentience

Thus far Mead's generalization of the notion of relativity has not significantly diverged from Einstein's special theory. Upon one point, however, Mead felt that Einstein was in error. Einstein maintained, as we have noted above, that all bodies are in motion with respect to each other and that it is impossible to designate a particular body as at rest. Mead was not content to stop his reflections at this point. The relativity of the world to a particular or individual perspective simply represents the problem of relativity.[1] But problems admit themselves to solutions, and much of Mead's creative thought is developed around his solution to the problem which relativity presents--the problem of the organization of perspectives.[2] Mead affirms, along with Alfred North Whitehead, that in the final analysis the determination that any body or system of bodies is in motion must come back to a "here and now" which is at rest.[3] Using Whitehead's terminology, Mead calls this "here and now" a "consentient set." A consentient set is a situation or perspective that is so organized with respect to a percipient event or observer that contemporary events and the next reaction of the observer will be regarded as simultaneous with the observer.[4] In other terms, a consentient set is the world stratified at a given moment in relation to a given viewpoint. It is an objectified space within which certain relations remain constant. Whatever laws of change are described, and whatever dimensions of time and space are determined, can be so described and determined only from a platform within which there is consentience.

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[1] MT, pp. 412-417.

[2] Mead's solution to this problem, in terms of the social development of the self is presented in chapter two. See also below, pp. 144-152.

[3] SW, pp. 274-277; PA, p. 597. Mead acknowledges his indebtedness to Whitehead on this point.

[4] PA, p. 583.

Mead maintains that these consentient sets are an objective aspect of nature, and that any relativistic world view is faulty if it excludes them from consideration. An example of a consentient set is the traveler who orients himself to the airplane in which he is a passenger. He and the interior of the plane together form a consentient set. Within this consentient set the traveler's pen forms a dot upon a piece of paper as he thinks about what to write next in a letter he is composing. On the earth beneath the airplane stands a meter reader who forms a consentient set together with his surroundings. The airplane is included within this consentient set, but in this case it is moving rather than at rest as it is for the traveler. In the consentient set that includes the meter reader, the traveler's pen is not forming a dot, but is forming a very long, invisible line across the sky. Mead's affirmation, which he takes to be more fundamental than Einstein's world which includes no rest, is that nature includes within itself a multitude of such consentient sets. The relative world contains rest as well as motion.

The adequacy of Mead's assessment of the Einsteinian world view as far as rest and motion are concerned may perhaps be debated, but such a debate would be beside the point. What is at issue here is the shape of the relativistic world that Mead describes, and it is quite clear that he finds in it consentience or organization as well as chaotic disjunction. More germane than whether or not Mead has been entirely fair to Einstein is the question whether or not what Mead presents is an adequate description of man's experience of the world. If relativity means that all objects are different because of their being situated in different perspectives or consentient sets with different perceiving individual life forms, then it would appear that Mead has fallen into a kind of solipsistic trap. But it is most emphatically not Mead's intention to restrict the experience of physical objects to individuals. There is a social dimension to consentience--a very fundamental social dimension. An individual consentient set is perhaps not excluded from consideration--the flight of the original astronaut comes to mind--but consentience is generally social. In dealing with this problem, Mead writes:

> This restriction of the object entirely to the experience of a specific individual is not at all involved in the doctrine of relativity. A number of individuals may belong to a consentient set. The same objects will be at rest and in motion for all who belong to that set. The same object is food for all animals with a certain digestive apparatus. It represents a certain relation between the field and individuals. *In so far as this relationship is identical, objects may be identical.*[1] (Italics mine.)

When one evaluates the Newtonian world view in terms of this quotation, one may say that the strength of the Newtonian system lies in the adequacy with which it describes the relations obtaining within a single consentient set. Its weakness lies in its failure to consider the existence of alternative sets.

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[1] *PA*, p. 258.

But relativity's introduction of the notion of a plurality of coexisting perspectives or consentient sets does not annihilate the common experience of identical objects in the world any more than it restricts the organization of a perspective to a discrete individual. Just as many individuals may share the same perspective, so also may a number of perspectives share the same object. That is, an object may retain essentially the same identity in several perspectives. Whether or not it does is a matter for empirical investigation. This is not to diminish the importance of the differences among perspectives. There are such differences and they are real differences. But there are also similarities. One does not find in Mead a doctrinaire rejection of the general world-view of the past, with all its constants and fixed relations. Mead accepts that world-view as far as it goes, and accounts in his own relativistic view for everything it had accounted for. But he also goes beyond the old view in that he accounts for new phenomena for which no account can be given in the old view. His approach is experimental, not ideological, and his work reflects both the broad theorizing and the in-depth empirical analysis of the experimentalist. Thus he describes what he finds, and he finds in the relative universe both identity and difference. One of his most felicitous statements of this character of the relative universe is presented as the presupposition upon which he has written the article, "The Experiential Basis of Natural Science,"

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from which I have quoted so liberally in the preceding pages:

> The reflective experience, the world, and the things within it exist in the form of situations. These situations are fundamentally characterized by the relations of an organic individual to his environment or world. The world, things, and the individual are what they are because of this relation. If presented as different from the form in which they exist in this situation, the difference is due to their existence in another situation similarly determined. These things and situations are identical in so far as their characters are the same and differ in so far as these characters differ. There are real identities, but these identities do not constitute things which have separable existences from the objects within which the differences exist, though in the isolation of abstractive thought they have been so presented. The peculiarities of the different situations are not those of appearances or phenomena which inadequately reflect an absolute reality. These situations are the reality. The identical characters of objects in the different situations are the basis for intelligent conduct, which involves different situations.[1]

Summary Statement

Enough material has now been presented to illustrate both the fundamental role played by the notion of relativity in Mead's thought, and the generality of its application. Mead's relative or perspectival universe represents a radical departure from the basic reality assumptions of classical antiquity which had persisted at most levels right up to and even into the twentieth century. The question of substance or "nature" of an entity does not lose its importance in Mead's relativistic view, but the basis of the determination of substance or nature is seen to be entirely different. The nature of an entity is situationally determined. A thing achieves its identity within a whole field of relatedness, a field stratified out of a plurality of possible fields by the selective power of life. Moreover, the "same" object may be stratified from the standpoint of a number of fields or situations, and to the extent that this multiple stratification is the case, the object may be a different object in each situation. To reiterate the general statement of relativity presented in the introductory pages of this section, individual identity in a relative universe is a function of the social context.[1] A difference in the dimensions of the social context in which an object is viewed may very well result in the object's having a different nature.

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[1] PA, p. 258.

The nature of an object in a situation is its real nature--there is no "more real" nature of the object, of which the character of that object in any particular situation is but an appearance. The human mind, by its ability to occupy a plurality of situations in a single act of thought, is able to discern certain common characteristics prevailing among objects in a number of situations. But such abstractive facility leads not to an increment in the discernment of reality as over against mere appearance; it leads rather to a discernment of increasing dimensions of realities formerly seen in a more restricted context. This represents an increment in social utility and aesthetic valuation, but throughout all levels of generality one is still dealing with that which is "real." From Mead's

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[1] See above, p. 18. The manner in which elements included within the boundaries of a situation are mutually determinative of one another is but one dimension of the notion of "the social" or "sociality" in Mead's thought. Further dimensions of the notion will become apparent in the subsequent sections of chapter one and in chapter two. At the present juncture I wish only to call attention to the fact that in the dimension of sociality here considered, the notions of sociality and relativity are essentially the same.

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point of view, then, when one asks the classic philosophical question, "what is being?" he must understand that he is actually asking a "how" question rather than a "what" question. That is, the question of being is actually a question of relations, not of eternal and absolute identity. And if this is so, then the fundamental philosophical question must be "how are relationships formed?"; or in more classical terms, "how do things become?". The question of being is an operational question. The answer to the question of being is to be found in the description of situations and how they operate.[1] The preceding discussion of the notion of relativity represents a fundamental part of Mead's answer. A second fundamental part of his answer is found in the way in which the notion of evolution is generically characteristic of his thought, and it is to this subject that the discussion now moves.

Evolution

The Notion in General

In dealing with the notion of evolution, one must be careful to make a distinction similar to that made in the previous section concerning the notion of relativity. The necessary distinction is that between the notion of evolution as a particular biological hypothesis concerning the differentiation and development of various biological forms--the hypotheses of Jean Lamarck and Charles Darwin, for instance--and the notion of evolution as a generic philosophical or metaphysical characteristic of reality as a whole. The difference between the two lies in the dimensions of the data to be included within the hypothesis. Lamarck and Darwin conducted extensive observations of various forms of life, and on the basis of these observations constructed hypotheses that would account for what they observed. In the years subsequent to their investigations, new research, especially the work of Gregor Mendel in the field of genetics, has led to the formulation of evolutionary hypotheses which have significantly advanced and in some cases superseded their earlier work. Lamarck's theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics has, for example, largely been discredited, and Darwin's theory of natural selection has been modified in some important respects. The details of these developments need not concern us here.[1] Our concern at present is with the fact that all of these developments have taken place within the context of the broader assumption that, whatever the exact mechanism may have been, the world as we know it today and all of the life forms existent within it have evolved out of earlier worlds containing forms of quite a different character. Whatever is at present owes its existence to that which has been in the past but no longer exists in that form. Or in other terms, present levels of existence are achievements, not eternal givens. At this level of generality, the notion of evolution is a fundamental philosophical outlook upon the origins and operations of the world, and is compatible with any number of theories as to just how the evolution in question may have taken place. It is at this level that the notion of evolution is so much in evidence in Mead's thought.

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[1] Thus the pervasive character of the notion of relativity in Mead's thought helps clarify at least one of the roots of his involvement in the philosophical movement known as "Pragmatism." The relative character of the universe demands that the philosopher contemplate by what action or what means situations and their objects come into being.

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[1] For relatively current and highly comprehensive material on the developments and issues in evolutionary thought, see Evolution After Darwin, The University of Chicago Centennial, ed. by Sol Tax (3 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

In the bulk of Mead's literary legacy, the fundamental conceptions of his thought are more implicitly buried in the writing than explicitly dealt with, but this is not the case with respect to his appreciation of the notion of evolution and its philosophical implications. In his lectures on the history of ideas in the nineteenth century, Mead deals explicitly with the issue in a chapter entitled, "Evolution Becomes a General Idea."[1] The chapter is not, strictly speaking, "historical," if one means by that term only a chronicle of past developments. What Mead offers in the lectures comprising this chapter is partially a chronicle, but more significantly, from the point of view of the purpose of this dissertation, it is a philosophical discussion of just exactly what is involved in making the notion of evolution into a general metaphysical principle. Mead's thought as a whole exemplifies what he presents in this discussion.

His presentation develops the notion of evolution in two ways: in the first place by contrasting it with the classical assumption of the priority of the form over the existence of the object and with the inability of Newtonian science to account in any manner for the existence of particular forms; and in the second place by developing the alternative hypothesis that the fundamental reality of the universe is processive rather than static.

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[1] MT, pp. 153-168.

Evolution Contrasted with Traditional Views

Mead chose Emmanuel Kant and Aristotle as representatives of a reality assumption which evolution replaces. At first glance it may appear that the dissimilarities between these men would be far greater than the similarities, and so the case may be, depending upon the point of emphasis in a comparison between the two. But the issue for Mead is the givenness of the forms of existence, and in this respect Kant and Aristotle are in agreement. The forms of existence are givens, not merely in the rather obvious sense that something is there in the world, but in the sense that what is there in the world has been primordially given and has endured in its primordial form. Mead sees Kant as operating on the assumption of "static forms which are originally given."[1] In summary statement:

> Kant conceived of the basic forms of the world as being given in the character of the mind itself. The forms of space and time--given in the sensibility, the forms of the understanding--given in the categories, and the forms of the reason, all these are in advance of experience. . . . It is not an object for our cognitive experience unless it has these forms that give it its reality. . . . the form is given in advance. . . . Kant insisted that, in order for there to be an object, the form must be there first.[2]

Mead asserts that this approach to reality is totally incompatible with the notion of evolution. "The logical pre-existence of the form to the object cannot be stated in terms of process; therefore it falls outside evolutionary ideas."[3]

Interestingly enough, Mead sees in the philosophical movement known as Romantic Idealism, represented by Fichte, Schelling, and especially Hegel, a challenge to the Kantian position that clearly anticipates the notion of evolution.

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[1] MT, p. 153. [2] MT, p. 153. [3] MT, p. 153.

> But the Romantic idealists changed all that [the preexistence of the form]. For them, the forms arose in the very process of experience.
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> . . . .
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> The process of experience, according to these idealists, creates its own forms. Now this has a very abstruse sound, of course; but what I want to call your attention to is that it is nothing but an abstract statement of the principle of evolution. These Romantic Idealists were undertaking in the field of philosophical speculation what Darwin and Lamarck were undertaking in the field of organic phenomena at the same period. What the Romantic Idealists, and Hegel in particular, were saying, was that the world evolves, that reality itself is in a process of evolution.[1]

Just as Kant located the forms of reality in the human understanding, so Aristotle before him had lodged the forms of things in nature itself.

> If we look back to the great systematic philosopher of the ancient world, Aristotle, we find that he regarded the world as provided with "forms." . . . [Forms] answer to the nature of things, that about things which is known. . . . Aristotle recognized such noble objects, such forms, in nature in so far as nature was rational.[2]

These forms did not, strictly speaking, have a temporal dimension in Aristotle's way of thinking.

> For Aristotle the tree, the lion, the tiger, has always been there from time immemorial. They had certain natures, they continued to have them. . . . From Aristotle's standpoint the thing was there. The business was to find out its nature.[3]

This is not to say that Aristotelian thought is not compatible with evolutionary thought of a certain type.

> The Aristotelian evolution was the development of the so-called "form," the nature of the thing which was already present.

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[1] MT, p. 154. [2] MT, p. 4. [3] PA, p. 80.

> It presupposed the existence of the form as something that was there. In this conception a metaphysical entity was thought of which existed in and directed the development of the form.[1]

In other words, the only evolution compatible with the Aristotelian view is the evolution of a pre-existent or given form, say a dog, as it undergoes development *as a dog*. In this kind of evolution, "dogness" is the fundamental reality and the development of the dog is quite ancillary to this "dogness."

But the notion of evolution as Mead sees it reverses this order of metaphysical significance. Evolution as a metaphysical principle means that the process of development is the fundamental reality, and that at a certain juncture in this process a dog comes into being.

> It is an evolution of the form, of the nature, and not an evolution of the particular animal or plant. What this theory is interested in is the evolution of the nature of the object, of the form, *in a metaphysical sense*.[2] (Italics mine.)

This is an affirmation of literally earth-shaking proportion. It means that there is no such thing as a tree or a lake or even a planet that has existed forever, but rather that whatever exists now exists as a phase of an ongoing process. All forms--the "natures" of everything--have arisen. There are no given existents at all.[3]

This disjunction between an ancient reality assumption and a modern one is not limited to the realm of philosophical speculation. Mead asserts that the notion of evolution represents a significant contrast in the realm of physical science as well. According to his interpretation, physical science of the Newtonian sort is neither interested in nor capable of dealing with the concept of form. The mechanical world of Newtonian science consists only of two objects: the world as a whole and the ultimate physical particles of which it is made up. All other objects are cut out by human perception. As all physical particles are related to one another in a single, inclusive electro-magnetic field, there is no compelling reason why certain particles should be taken together and called a tree. These particles are related every bit as much to the particles comprising a star. They do not comprise a tree or a star because of the physical definition given to them. The world of Newtonian mechanical science is starkly and simply a world of physical particles in ceaseless motion; possibly, if Sadi Carnot was correct, headed toward an equilibrium or entropy because of the dissipation of heat in energy transformations.[1] There is no place within this conceptual framework for the concept of an individual form. This being the case, neither is there room for the notion of a process within which forms are created. The notion of evolution, as has been noted in the previous paragraph, deals precisely with the creation of forms. Thus the notion of evolution represents an outlook upon the physical world which stands in rather sharp contrast to the conceptions of Newtonian science. One might perhaps object that the subject matter of Newtonian science and evolution is not strictly comparable, but the objection might be countered by suggesting that the problem of form is of such importance that the inability of Newtonian science to deal with it adequately renders that science obsolete. However that may be, Mead's intent is clear. He wishes to contrast a lively world which consists of the process of the creation of forms with the formless world of Newton which admits only of such process as leads to the ultimate entropy of the whole.

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[1] *MT*, p. 160. [2] *MT*, pp. 160-161. [3] *MT*, p. 161.

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[1] __MT__, pp. 154-159.

Reality as a Process of Becoming

In his positive exposition of evolution, Mead attempts to show that the most significant aspect of evolutionary thought is that it points to the ultimacy of process in reality. In discussing Darwin he analyzes the matter in this way:

> What lies back of this conception is the idea of a process, a life-process, that may take now one, now another, form. The thing of importance is that there is a distinction made between this life-process and the form that it takes. This was not the case with the earlier Aristotelian conception. In it, the life-process was thought of as expressed in the form; the form had to be there in order that there might be life. . . . The same idea lies behind the conception of Lamarck. He assumes a life process which may appear in one form or another, but which is the same process whatever form it takes on.[1]

Note that Mead is not, in this passage, analyzing the particular means by which an amphibian left the sea or the giraffe developed a long neck. He is operating at a more fundamental level--picking out, as it were, the fundamental structure common to the theories of both Darwin and Lamarck, and presumably of other men as well. "We are concerned with a theory which involves a process as its fundamental fact, and then with this process as appearing in different forms."[2] This is the process of philosophical generalization, and Mead is quite careful to show that it is just that. "If, then, one is to make a philosophy out of this evolutionary movement, one must recognize some sort of process within which the particular form arises."[3]

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[1] _MT_, p. 161. [2] _MT_, p. 163. [3] _MT_, p. 164.

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And again, "Now, if you generalize this, make a philosophic doctrine out of it, you come back to some central process which takes place under different conditions. . . ."[1]

The point of this distinction between the general process and the forms in which it appears in response to the conditions prevailing in the situation, is that it represents an example of empirical investigation of the world which concludes that what is ultimate in that world is a process of becoming rather than a state of being. One discovers this process of becoming in a number of determinate forms of existence, but regardless of this plurality of manifestation, the process is seen to be all-pervasive and continuing. The world, in other words, is something that is going on. It is not simply there in abstraction from its historical dimension. It is continually growing and developing.

But at the same time, as the world-process continues to develop it is continually confronted in each phase of its growth by a plurality of achieved forms of existence. New forms do develop, but they always develop in concert with older forms. Or in other terms, the process which is to be distinguished from the forms of its manifestation does not absolutely control its future. The doctrine of relativity is much in evidence here. "The heart of the problem of evolution is the recognition that the process will determine the form according to the conditions within which it goes on."[2] (Italics mine.) Mead illustrates this point by recalling to mind how the life process is the same for both carnivorous and herbivorous animals, but the digestive tracts of the two types of animal have taken different forms in response to the different conditions under which the animals have lived.[1] A particular form, in this case a particular structure of the digestive tract, is "simply the organ within which a certain function takes place."[2] The form is an evolutionary achievement that has come into being in response to a dual determination. It is responsive both to the process that is going on, and to the other forms which comprise the situation within which the evolution takes place. We may here equate "situation" with a determinate phase of an ongoing process. That which becomes in the situation or phase of the process is the product of the mutual inter-relationship of all factors involved. It expresses both the "causal" determination exercised by the environment upon the process as that process struggles toward the achievement of form, and the "logical" determination which the form exercises upon the potential environment.[3] The upshot of the whole matter is that, while the notion of evolution does represent a shift in metaphysical

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[1] MT, p. 166.

[2] MT, p. 166.

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[1] MT, pp. 164-165.

[2] MT, p. 166.

[3] PA, pp. 115-117. Mead's use of the term "logical" to indicate the selective power of the process of becoming is indicative of the radical shift in metaphysical outlook implicit in the notion of evolution. "Logic" has traditionally indicated certain fixed relationships among propositions. As such, it deals in abstractions. But abstractions may ultimately be traced to that which is concrete, and it is at this point that the traditional logic breaks down. Mead puts the matter this way: "Aristotle's logic is built upon the theory of the thing. From his standpoint the thing is something there. That is not the attitude of modern science. . . . Our interest is to find out how any particular thing comes to be, and for that we have a different type of logic." (PA, p. 80.) This "different type of logic" is to be discovered in the mechanism of becoming, and a fundamental aspect or phase of that mechanism is the selective activity of process--the "logical" determination of the environment exercised by the process as it evolves in its new form.

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emphasis from changeless being to becoming, the concept of being does not lose its significance. The evolution of reality, where that term is taken to mean the world-whole, is actually a _dialectic_ of being and becoming. One must bear in mind, however, that whatever forms of being represent the conditions for the becoming of a new form of being, each has an historical dimension of its own. Each has become what it now is.

The notion of relativity implies that forms of existence arise in situations in which all aspects of a situation mutually determine what each shall become. The notion of evolution likewise implies that reality is essentially a process of becoming. The two notions are in a sense complimentary. Relativity indicates how that which is evolving evolves in a total context of interrelationships. Evolution indicates that relationships that are once formed are not eternal; that situations or fields of relatedness come into being and pass away again as they are succeeded by new situations just evolving in which new forms will come into being. As Mead puts it at one point, "Existence involves non-existence; it does take place. The world is a world of events."[1] Reality is something that happens, that is going on, that is en route to becoming what it has not yet been. Its passage is marked by definite phases or events, but none of these phases endures throughout the entire passage. The evolutionary process moves relentlessly on.

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[1] _PP_, p. 1.

Evolution Proceeds by Problem-Solving

But Mead sees a kind of consistency in the operation of the evolutionary process, a "method of operation," as it were. "Evolution is the process of meeting and solving problems."[1] A problem is constituted by a state of affairs in which what is going on is brought to a momentary halt. Usually this is caused by the presence of alternative courses of further development--of possibilities; but the halting of an action may also take place by the appearance in a situation of factors which render the method of that action inoperable. The child's experiences with the candles constituted a problem; and the child's reconstruction of the meaning of the candle, together with the new world of relationships attendent upon that reconstruction, represents an instance of evolution. At another level of existence, the Darwinian theory of natural selection points to the same sort of problem-solving procedure in the evolutionary process as does Mead. According to Darwin's theory, the changing environment of a species of life affected the further development of members of that species in such a manner as to foster the continual development of members of that species whose individual variations were best suited to the changing set of environmental conditions, and to inhibit the further development of variations within the species which were less well suited to the new set of conditions. It must be remarked that Mead did not accept the theory of natural selection as it stood, for he felt that it overemphasized the selective power of the environment and neglected the selective power of the living form itself.[1] That is, unmodified Darwinian natural selection dwells upon "causal" determination to the detriment of "logical" determination, thus masking the mutuality that characterizes the evolutionary process. But be this as it may, Mead felt that Darwin was correct in so far as he recognized the problem-solving character of biological evolution. "The acceptance of the Darwinian hypothesis is simply the acceptance of Darwin's view that selection under the struggle for existence would pick out the organ that is necessary for survival."[2] Evolution takes place because pressures are brought to bear upon the status quo. If there were no such pressures, no problems admitting of solutions, evolution might not occur. But this is a meaningless supposition, from Mead's point of view, for the world is continually confronted by pressures and problems, and adjustment is continually made to them in the process of evolution.

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[1] MT, p. 143.

The reconstruction of reality under the impetus of conflict is thus the description of the evolutionary pattern. All of nature fits this pattern--nature is a process continually reconstructing itself in the face of conflicts.[1] This is particularly apparent in the activities undertaken by the human community for the purpose of controlling its environment. Every advance in human technology and social organization represents an instance of the process of evolution, of the reconstruction of reality. The whole phenomenon of human existence--reflective thought, social organization, technology, etc.--belongs entirely to "nature" and thus to the evolutionary process.

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[1] PA, p. 116. See also MSS, p. 250. The power of living creatures to determine the environment is perhaps apparent at the human level. It may be illustrated at the subhuman level by reference to the formation of islands in the South Pacific Ocean. At first there is nothing but the sea. Then a solid surface is built up by the life activities of coral, a type of animal. Then birds begin to use this surface as a stopping place, bringing with them seeds from other places and the fertilizers necessary to the growth of the seeds. The end result is an island with vegetation where there had been no island before. The whole process takes a great length of time, and is carried out in cooperation with such non-living activities as undersea earthquakes and the wave action of the sea itself, but the dependence of the birth of such an island upon the activities of various life-forms is clear. Life is not as pliant to its environment as the theory of natural selection may suggest.

[2] MT, p. 166.

Evolution, it will be remembered, is to be understood as a central process which realizes itself in a plurality of forms. At some point in the history of evolution, the process which had been realizing itself in inorganic forms passed over into a new level of development. Out of the inorganic evolved the living, although Mead had to admit that the exact date and means of this transformation is beyond conjecture.[2] Another developmental level of tremendous transitional importance was reached when reflexively conscious life--man--evolved out of forms of life which had been, in varying degrees, conscious only non-reflexively or not at all.[3] A kind of metamorphosis has occurred with the evolution of the human mind or reflexive consciousness. Most of the pressures and conflicts which have been important in the evolution of life up to and including the emergence of man are now subject to control by human society.[1]

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[1] PP, p. 174.

[2] PA, p. 350. For contemporary material on "biopoesis" or the natural evolution of life out of the inorganic see Harlow Shapely, "On the Evidences of Inorganic Evolution," and Hans Gaffron, "The Origin of Life," Evolution After Darwin, vol. I, pp. 39-95. The matter is perhaps not beyond conjecture, as Mead had suggested, but it is certainly a highly conjectural matter! The available evidence is supportive, weakly, of a number of theories, none of which has as yet carried the field.

[3] For a discussion of "consciousness" see chapter two.

> The human society that can itself determine what the conditions are within which it lives is no longer in a situation of simply trying to meet the problems that the environment presents. . . . The human situation is a development of the control which all living forms exercise over their environment in selection and in organization, but the human society has reached an end which no other form has reached, that of actually determining, within certain limits, what its inorganic environment will be. . . . apart from such limits, those forces which affect the life of the form and can conceivably change it in the Darwinian sense have come under the control of the society itself, and, in so far as they come under the exercised control of the society, human society presents an end of the process of organic evolution.[2]

The term "end" is not to be understood as the "goal" of the evolutionary process. To make such a claim would be foreign to Mead's way of thinking. The "end" in question is simply the termination of a recognizable phase of the process. Lest there be any misunderstanding on this point, Mead appended the following statement to the preceding quotation: "It is needless to add that, so far as the development of human society is concerned, the process itself is a long way from its goal."[3]

It may be a long way from its goal, but nevertheless it is on its way, realizing itself in the activities of the human community as a whole.

> What I am suggesting is that this process, in which a perspective ceases to be objective, becomes if you like subjective, and in which new common minds and new common perspectives arise, is an instance of the organization of perspectives in nature, of the

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[1] MSS, p. 250. See also MT, p. 168.

[2] MSS, pp. 251-252.

[3] MSS, p. 252.

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> creative advance of nature. This amounts to the affirmation that mind as it appears in the mechanism of social conduct is the organization of perspectives in nature and at least a phase of the creative advance of nature.[1]

Nature is an evolution, proceeding by the reconstruction of itself in the face of conflicts; and man, belonging in his entirety to nature, is now the means of nature's further evolution. Such is Mead's view of the landscape of evolution, and also his hope for its future. The world is the world of man, and what man and his world shall become is entrusted to man's care.

Evolution and Mead's Philosophical Method

Mead's whole career as a philosopher is understandable from this viewpoint. He sought to create a philosophy that was "at home in the world," a philosophy that would be man's servant in his attempt to fulfill the role thrust upon him by nature.

> Its [philosophy's] office must then be to enable us, who are parts of this evolving universe, to capture the meaning it has for us because its evolutionary process appears in us as intelligence.
>
> . . . .
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> . . . it is the technical function of philosophy so to state the universe that what we call our conscious life can be recognized as a phase of its creative advance.[2]

There is a sense of moral urgency in the doing of this sort of philosophy, and this sense of urgency is frequently apparent in Mead's writing. He felt that in the most profound sense generic mankind was now situated at the cutting edge of evolutionary change. The future of everything that has being or might conceivably have being lies in the thoughts and activities of the human community, and the human community is unprepared to execute adequately the role which evolutionary history has thrust upon it. As man has emerged in this history with his reason, simultaneously there have emerged unprecedented possibilities for the control of nature in both its physical and human dimensions, and for the enhancement of nature in both its dimensions through the exercise of this control. Man and the possibilities of nature--which are man's own possibilities--are co-emergents in the process of evolution. Reason and responsibility find themselves inextricably intertwined, and reason has failed responsibility.

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[1] SW, p. 316.

[2] PA, p. 515.

> Society has not yet reached the adequate insight or the full willingness to respond to William James's appeal that it accept the responsibility for having introduced morality into the world.[1]

Mead seems to have felt that his work in philosophy--and any philosophy undertaken from this evolutionary point of view--would assist the human community to see and understand its peculiar position of responsibility for the future of nature. As for the willingness of society to act in terms of this understanding, the very separation of the matter of volition from the matter of knowledge indicates that Mead was aware of the potential discrepancy between the two.[2] But the unpredictability of the future--in this case the response of society to the discovery of its evolutionary task--does not represent for Mead an adequate reason for retiring from the field of conflict. In a very fundamental sense his whole philosophy seeks to awaken mankind to the fact of its position of control in the evolutionary process, and to motivate men to exercise this control intelligently and creatively.[1]

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[1] MT, p. 518.

[2] See MSS, pp. 303-311 for a discussion of "fundamental sociophysiological impulses" which lead to behavior which is hostile and antagonistic rather than friendly and cooperative.

Mead's near-reverence for the methodology of modern science may more adequately be understood against the backdrop of his sweeping view of the evolutionary process. American pragmatism as a philosophical outlook has from time to time been criticised as lacking depth, as representing a too facile love affair with some of the more obvious successes of modern science and technology. Whatever relevance this criticism may have with respect to other thinkers, it cannot easily be laid at Mead's doorstep. For Mead the application of the scientific method of observation, experimentation, and reconstruction represents man's coming to terms with his environment as no other form of life has yet been able to do. Human society is more fully "at home on the earth" because:

> . . . it has gradually become aware of the method of meeting its problems, the method of reconstructing its environment and itself. The method is that of experimental science, by means of which men change the environment within which society exists, and the forms and institutions of society itself.[2]

That is, science is a tool by which the human community exercises its place of control in the further development of the evolutionary process.[3] To the extent that mankind is able to wield this tool with intelligence and skill, the world becomes a less hostile sphere in which to live and existence in it is enhanced.

Mead maintains that in a rather fundamental sense the methodology of modern science reflects the "pulse," as it were, of the whole evolutionary process. "The scientific method, as such, is, after all, only the evolutionary process grown self-conscious."[1] (Italics mine.) The characteristic of the evolutionary process is problem-solving or reconstruction, and the reconstruction of the world is, in Mead's view "the business of science."[2] In order to serve the role of the human community as the agent of continuing evolution, science makes empirical investigation of contemporary reality. It is perhaps in this very act of investigation that "true" science (as contrasted with mechanistic or Newtonian science) most clearly reflects its inner connection with the notion of evolution. Mead develops this point in the following manner:

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[1] See, for example, George Mead, "The Genesis of the Self and Social Control," SW, pp. 267-293.

[2] PA, p. 503.

[3] MT, p. 360.

> What I want to point out in this connection is that our modern scientific method abstracts from the things which had been philosophically, metaphysically defined, and occupies itself with what is happening. It has brought on what we now call the "event" as the object of observation. We do not observe, as Aristotle observed, to see through the process to what the nature of the object itself is. We observe to see what changes take place, what motions are going on, and at what velocities. . . . the point I am making is that modern science is interested in what happens as distinct from the thing which was supposed to be responsible for the nature of the happening. And when it comes to the statement of the thing, it defines it in terms of the process going on.[3]

Thus science describes happenings rather than static natures, as befits a universe which is itself continually evolving into what it has not yet been. The descriptions offered by science become data by means of which problematic aspects of reality are hypothetically reconstructed, and when such hypotheses are found to be successful in practice, science has become the means of evolutionary advance. It is in this manner that human intelligence, itself a product of the evolutionary process, becomes an ingredient in the further development of that process.

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[1] MT, p. 364.   [2] MT, p. 138.   [3] MT, pp. 451-452.

Basic Implications of the Notion

To recapitulate, briefly, the examination of Mead's notion of evolution and the role it plays in his thought has established perhaps three basic points. The first is that the notion of evolution transforms the question of being into the question of becoming. That which lies at the base of all reality is an ongoing process rather than a static substance or nature. The second point is that the evolutionary process proceeds on its course of development by means of problem-solving. Various pressures are brought to bear upon given situations at a certain level of evolutionary achievement, and these pressures are in a sense responsible for the emergence of new levels of achievement--new situations in which what formerly constituted a problem does so no longer. The third basic point that has emerged from this discussion is that the human community occupies a position of unique importance in the evolutionary process due to the enhanced possibility of controlling the environment which is co-emergent with the human mind. A fourth basic point is yet to be made. It is Mead's assumption--perhaps more implicit than explicit, but certainly manifesting itself concurrently with the other three points--that the whole evolutionary process is of a unitive or self-contained character. It requires no explanation for its existence other than the fact of its own operation, and each of the achieved forms of existence within it may be accounted for solely in terms of the process itself.

This point corresponds to what has been mentioned earlier concerning the incompatibility of the notion of relativity and the notion of any kind of an absolute existent. Just as nothing exists in and of itself without being affected by other inter-related existents, so also nothing comes into existence through the influence or determination of an agency lying outside the dimensions of the evolutionary process as a whole. What is being denied here--and I would repeat that this denial is more implicit than explicit--is that there can be any appeal to any transcendental entity to "explain" any evolutionary development. The term "transcendental" may be taken here to mean that which stands outside of the evolutionary process--that which may perhaps effect change in the process without itself being subject to what is occurring in the process. There is no room for such external causal agency in Mead's thought. Whatever is seen to influence any aspect of the evolutionary process which is nature, is to be accounted for in terms of the laws and relations obtaining within the process. This does not mean that Mead rules out the future discovery of certain forces at work in nature of which mankind is currently unaware. Nor does it mean that he denies that there are aspects of the natural process which are "mysterious" in their occurrence.[1] It simply means that Mead would allow the undiscovered to be the undiscovered and the mysterious to be the mysterious--without trying to account for them by appealing to some transcendental agency such as "God" or "the Being of all being" or the like. Within the process as a whole there are certain achieved structures of being and certain achieved agencies of becoming which in some sense transcend other such structures and agencies, but Mead would remind us of the common participation of them all in the history of evolution. An examination of this participation in a common evolutionary process reveals that, no matter how diversified in structure and function various achieved forms of existence may be, they may be traced back through the process to origins which are similar or perhaps even identical.[1]

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[1] See, for example, the ensuing section on "Emergence."

An example may be helpful. There is a strain of thought in the history of Western philosophical speculation which assumes that the human mind or self and the processes of nature understood in the physical sense represent two different orders of being. Rene Descartes is a representative of this tradition. Descartes' problem was to establish some kind of certainty amidst the uncertainty resulting from the radical difference between the unextended mind of man and the extended realm of nature. His solution begins with the certitude of self-existence--which is expressed in the famous Cogito ergo sum. What is interesting about this, from the point of view of this investigation, is the implicit assumption that the human self is an entity that may be grasped in complete abstraction from everything else which might be termed its "environment." The self which thinks is, for Descartes, a transcendental entity. Another representative of this approach to reality is Emmanuel Kant. For Kant the noumenal world of nature is forever hidden from the pure or theoretical reason of man. Man's pure reason reaches only a phenomenal world in which all characters and relations are supplied by the mind itself. The only means to surmount the uncertainty created by this gap between the noumenon or nature and the phenomenon or historical perception is to be found in the activity of man's moral or practical reason, and the implications that can be drawn from this activity. Again, the interesting thing about this approach, from our point of view, is the implicit assumption that the human self or mind is a transcendental entity which has a structure of its own in complete abstraction from the natural order which is its environment.

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[1] It is germane at this point to note that the acceptance of the notion of evolution as a metaphysical principle which is descriptive of generic reality opens one up to the problem of the "infinite regress." If reality is ultimately a process of becoming rather than a structure of being--if the unit of existence is a happening or event rather than a concrete substance or thing--then how is the question of the origin of the whole affair to be explained? It would seem that every instance of becoming presupposes a context of conditions out of which the becoming takes place. It would also seem that a process or series of becomings represents a kind of chain of interdependence which extends without limit into both past and future. How, then, is the whole process to be accounted for? The classical answer to this question has been that one must ultimately come to rest with something in the process which is totally independent and self-sustaining, which undergirds the whole process without itself being subject to reciprocal influence from it. Classical thought has been unable, by and large, to accept an infinite regression of interdependence as an adequate metaphysical resting place.

Mead does not, to my knowledge, deal with this issue per se, but it would seem that he would have to acknowledge that his evolutionary philosophy does involve an infinite regress in one of its fundamental categories--the category of process or becoming. It seems doubtful, however, that he would regard this matter with any great concern. An infinite regress constitutes a problem only within a metaphysic which has opted for stasis rather than process as one of its fundamental categories. In fact, to suggest that it is a problem at all is simply to restate such a presupposition in a different form. Where a process of becoming is fundamental to a metaphysic, as is the case with respect to Mead, an infinite regress loses its problematic character. The issue, in other words, is one of difference between fundamental world-assumptions, and it is fruitless to deal with it at any other level.

Mead perceived that the notion of evolution is fatal to any kind of speculation which assumes that there is such a disjunction between the realms of nature and mind, that the mind of man is a transcendental entity in and of itself. Mead makes his point in conjunction with his discussion of the thought of Johann Gottleib Fichte, a man who was essentially Kantian in his philosophical approach.[1] Fichte, like Kant, assumed the transcendental character of the self and its moral obligations. From this standpoint he proceeded by the process of deduction to establish the existence of the world of nature as the sphere of the self's moral activity. Mead concedes the correctness of the emphasis upon man's moral responsibility and his creative influence in the determination of the character of nature, but he also points to what he considers to be a fatal flaw in the whole approach. The notion of evolution--indeed the various biological theories of evolution which began to make their appearance shortly after Fichte's death--yields the conception that the fact of the human self or mind, and the moral responsibility that goes along with it, is totally dependent upon the prior development of the physical universe.[2] The human mind and all that it involves is an evolution out of a nature which, if it included "mind" at all, did not include mind in the sense in which it appears in man.[3] The human mind or self belongs to the one, inclusive evolutionary process, and this fact is enough to discredit totally the older notion that the minded self is an entity that transcends its physical environment in the sense that it is totally independent of it. There can be no complete disjunction of the realm of nature and mind in this point of view.

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[1] MT, pp. 85-110.

[2] See especially MT, pp. 90-91.

[3] Mead's theory regarding the "mechanism" of this evolution will be presented in chapter two.

The fact that the minded self is an emergent in the one evolutionary process does not, however, deny that there are differences of great magnitude between the physical and the mental. It simply denies that the differences are sufficient to separate the two as completely as the epistemological tradition has done.[1] "Consciousness as such refers to both the organism and its environment and cannot be located simply in either."[2] Consciousness or mind is actually a field of relatedness between the self and its surroundings, a field which has grown in intricacy in the later phases of the evolutionary process to the point where the self is now able to take control (still within limits) of its environment. But the self is not ultimately anything other than a particular phase of nature, and it belongs to nature as much as a rock or a river. It does not belong to a transcendental, outside realm of being.

Evolution, Behaviorism, and Pragmatism

It is this evolutionary point of view which lies behind Mead's behavioristic approach to psychology. If the notion of a transcendental self, somehow arriving with the infant at birth, is excluded from consideration, the alternative would seem to be that the self is an achievement of the infant during the course of his development.

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[1] MT, p. 308; PA, pp. 628-629. [2] MSS, p. 332.

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The problem is how to account for this achievement. The name most commonly associated with the psychological school known as "behaviorism" is that of John B. Watson. Watson's behaviorism was of a reductionistic character. Generalizing from studies in animal psychology, where the self-reporting or introspection of the animal is unavailable to the observer, Watson sought to account for human behavior solely in terms of the external conduct of human beings, without recourse to the "inner" world of consciousness. Mead rejected this sort of approach to the problem, but he retained the term "behaviorism" as descriptive of his approach in a "wider" sense.[1]

> Behaviorism in this wider sense is simply an approach to the study of the experience of the individual from the point of view of his conduct, particularly, but not exclusively, the conduct as it is observable by others.[2]

The assumption is that selfhood, consciousness, and mind are emergents in the course of this conduct or behavior. It is here that the full significance of the affirmation that man and all that is involved in being human belongs entirely to the realm of nature as an evolutionary process becomes apparent. Man develops a self and a mind, and in the processes of his self and mind he has an environment. The crucial point is that the two are not separated by some kind of metaphysical doctrine which belies their commonality in the evolutionary process. Mead writes, "We do not want two languages, one of certain physical facts and one of certain conscious facts."[3] The term "behaviorism" simply refers to the effort to understand the development of human characteristics according to natural processes. But it does not stand for an attempt to reduce these characteristics merely to the externally observable conduct of human beings. This kind of doctrinaire approach to things is totally foreign to Mead's way of approaching a problem. Accordingly he writes:

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[1] Mead's comments on behaviorism, and especially "social" behaviorism, may be found in MSS, pp. 1-41.

[2] MSS, p. 2.

[3] MSS, p. 40.

> A behavioristic psychology represents a _definite tendency rather than a system_, a tendency to state as far as possible the conditions under which the experience of the individual arises.[1] (Italics mine.)

This "tendency" is grounded in the conviction that selfhood and its component experience are natural emergents in evolutionary history. It is a "systematic" tendency only in the sense that it represents a particular point of view, but it is not systematic in the perjorative sense in which the data are manipulated until they fit into the systematic blueprint, i.e., in the Watsonian sense. Mead did not allow his interpretive formulations to stand in the way of the scientific method of problem-solving through experiment and observation.

Before terminating the discussion of the notion of evolution and its place in Mead's thought, it is appropriate to take brief notice of his pragmatic point of view in philosophy. The full context of this viewpoint will become much more apparent during the course of the discussion of the notion of "activity" at the conclusion of this chapter.[2] However, pragmatism owes much to the notion of evolution, and it would be well to demonstrate this connection at this point.

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[1] _MSS_, p. 38.

[2] See below, pp. 112-158.

Mead has this to say concerning the context of pragmatic philosophy:

> Well then, the sources of the pragmatic doctrine are these: one is behavioristic psychology, which enables one to put intelligence in its proper place within the conduct of the form, and to state that intelligence in terms of the activity of the form itself; the other is the research process, the scientific technique, which comes back to the testing of a hypothesis by its working.[1]

We have already seen, in the preceding paragraphs, how both of these "sources" are themselves rooted in an approach which assumes that nature is an evolution. Behaviorism seeks to account for the phenomenon of the self and its functions in terms of the natural evolution of the human form rather than in terms of a transcendental given. The research process or scientific method is the problem-solving evolutionary process grown self-conscious, i.e., passed into the control of the intelligence of the human community. Thus, to the extent that Mead's pragmatism does in fact reflect the insights of behavioristic psychology and the scientific method, it reflects also the root notion undergirding these insights.

Mead's estimation of the character of pragmatism may be found in his article, "A Pragmatic Theory of Truth."[2] The article as a whole deals, as the title suggests, with a particular approach to the question of the nature of truth. That problem can more profitably be discussed at a later point in the investigation. But the article also reflects the basic pragmatic point of view as Mead understands it, and in this connection he writes:

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[1] MT, p. 351.

[2] SW, pp. 320-344.

> Now I take it that the most distinctive mark of the Pragmatic movement is the frank acceptance of actual ongoing experience, experimentally controlled, as the standpoint from which to interpret the past and anticipate the future. So far as I can see this acceptance must recognize as ruled out any absolute order within which is to be placed a final concantenation of events past, present, and future.[1]

Nature is an evolution, a becoming. New forms are continually arising, while older forms recede into the background or pass out of existence altogether. How is one to grasp such a changing reality? One grasps such a reality through an analysis and description of the experience of that life form which is now in such a fundamental sense the agent of continuing evolution. The meanings of the past, present, and future are the achievements of the human community as it presses onward in its effort to understand itself and its surroundings, an effort which involves an understanding both of its origins and of its goals. These achievements of the human community are continually undergoing renewal as new light is cast upon older situations, as new perspectives (realities) are formed. There is no once and for all formulation of the understanding that man seeks. Reality has an undeniable temporal dimension--it is an evolution--and the key to its temporality lies in applied intelligence of human beings. Anything which lies beyond this kind of experience belongs to the category of the unknown and, at least for the moment, the unknowable. What the future will bring is uncertain, but what is certain is that whatever it will bring will be discovered by the same method--the analysis of actual, ongoing experience, experimentally controlled.

In the final analysis, the evolving, changing character of

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[1] SW, p. 344.

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reality is what presents pragmatic philosophy with its most crucial task. Older philosophies, based upon different world-assumptions, sought to find order and meaning in the world through speculation concerning its enduring structure. But this approach is not open to an evolutionary philosophy such as pragmatism. Pragmatism's task is to find order and meaning in the world through the discovery of methodologies, not structures, for only methodologies are suited to dealing with an incurably temporal universe.[1] The passage of time is ever attended by the appearance of new problems, and the key to the maintenance of enduring values in such a situation is to be found in the refinement of the techniques utilized to solve these problems and thereby reconstruct the universe. The question to be answered by philosophy is not "what is the nature of the universe?" It is rather, "How may the human community _act_ so as to insure itself that the changes attendent upon the passage of time will be creative of value rather than destructive?" Or in other words, "How may the human community best execute its role of control in the continuing process of evolution?"

Summary Outline

This brings to a close our initial treatment of the notion of evolution in Mead's thought. It has not been exhaustive, but it has been sufficient to establish Mead's understanding of the notion, its major implications, and the manner in which these are reflected in his fundamental scientific and philosophical viewpoints. The major points of emphasis have been these:

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[1] _SW_, pp. 324, 344.

1. As a philosophical generalization, the notion of evolution refers to a central process which undergirds all of reality and appears in a plurality of forms.
2. The main implications of the evolutionary process are:
   a. Forms are achievements rather than givens, which suggests that the category of "becoming" is more fundamental than the category of "being."
   b. The evolutionary process is a self-contained whole, and it requires no external or "transcendental" references to account for its operations. In fact, such references are excluded.
3. The main characteristics of the evolutionary process are:
   a. It proceeds by means of problem solving, of creative responses to various pressures encountered within it.
   b. Generic man or the human community as a whole now occupies a unique position of control in the continuing development of the process.
4. Mead's conception of the task of philosophy in general and pragmatic philosophy in particular, and his deep appreciation of the scientific method of investigation and his own applications of this method in the formation of his social behaviorism, reflect his basic assumption that the notion of evolution is an accurate way of describing a generic trait of the universe.

Emergence

Evolution and Emergent Evolution

The subject matter of the preceding section has been a general description of the notion of evolution and the role it plays in Mead's thinking. The subject matter of this present section also deals with the notion of evolution, but in a less general fashion. It has been established that evolution is a process that proceeds by means of solving problems.[1] New forms arise in the process in response to various pressures and interactions encountered by achieved forms of existence. As each problem is overcome, the old reality in which the problem occurred passes into non-existence as it is succeeded by a newly reconstructed reality in which the problem no longer appears. The investigation to be undertaken in this section is directed toward an analysis of the occurrence of evolutionary change. It seeks to establish the character of that which evolves--of the solution to the problem. The term Mead uses to describe this character is "emergence." The evolutionary process which he finds underlying all forms and structures of existence is a process of emergent evolution.[2]

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[1] See above, p. 59. For a description of what constitutes a "problem," see above, pp. 20-22 and p. 59.

[2] The phrase "emergent evolution" was popularized by C. Lloyd Morgan in his Gifford Lectures of 1922, published under the title, Emergent Evolution (New York: Henry Holt, 1927). Mead (SW, p. 273.) attributes the basic definition of the notion to Samuel Alexander in his Space, Time and Deity (London: McMillan and Co., 1920). However, Alexander actually gives Morgan credit for defining the term "emergence" (II, 14). Both Morgan and Alexander trace the entrance of the term into the current biological and philosophical vocabulary to G.H. Lewes' Problems of Life and Mind (London: Trubner and Co., 1875). While it is perhaps clear that the term "emergence" itself was borrowed by Mead from others, it is not at all clear that the meaning of the term was borrowed. I tend to think it was not, that Mead found both Alexander and Morgan congenial to his own way of thinking, but that he was not directly dependent upon them for the content of his work. It would be difficult, however, either to prove or disprove this in a conclusive manner, and it would perhaps also be somewhat beside the point.

Not every cosmology in which the notion of evolution plays a fundamental role includes the notion of emergence. The defining characteristic of emergent evolution, as contrasted to evolutionary viewpoints in which the dimension of emergence is either ignored or denied, is the affirmation that evolutionary progression reveals a series of discontinuities or unpredictable directions of change between its phases. Lloyd Morgan contrasts the term "emergent" to the term "resultant," finding in the latter term only the kind of change which is "additive" or "predictable," while the emergent represents a kind of change which is "constitutive" and "unpredictable."[1] Mead does not follow this particular terminology, but he interprets the issue in much the same manner. This issue is the predictability of the future, or in more classical nomenclature, the difference between a world-view that is deterministic and one that is not. The notion of emergence signifies for Mead the indeterminacy of the future, the reality of possibilities, and the sense of mystery surrounding the course of development of evolutionary history. It is my feeling that this dimension of Mead's evolutionary view of reality is of such fundamental significance to his thought that it merits analysis and development as a root notion in its own right. Mead himself implies as much when he suggests that occupation with the notion of emergence is the mark of contemporary philosophy;[2] also when in the conclusion to his course on Social Psychology, he summarizes the view of consciousness he has developed as reflecting the philosophical concepts of relativity and emergence;[3] and also when in the conclusion to his Carus Foundation lectures, he summarizes the importance of that investigation into the nature of the present in terms of the notions of sociality and emergence.[1] These suggestions will appear to carry even more weight when some of the rest of his material is analyzed, so we will now proceed with that analysis.

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[1] Emergent Evolution, pp. 5-6. [2] PA, p. 640. [3] MSS, pp. 329-330.

Emergence and Novelty

The initial step in this analysis is to establish exactly what Mead understands by the notion of emergence. The matter is rather complex, but what he basically affirms is the evolution in the universe of forms of existence which are novel, and he understands by the term "novel" that which is both unprecedented and unpredictable.

> When things get together, there arises something that was not there before, and that character is something that cannot be stated in terms of the elements which go to make up the combination.[2]

He uses the emergence of water from the elements of hydrogen and oxygen to illustrate his point. In the primordial phases of inorganic evolution there may have been a stage in which hydrogen and oxygen existed in their gaseous forms without ever having become compounded into water. Then such compounding takes place and water emerges with its characteristics of fluidity and the capacity to satisfy thirst in organic forms of life. Mead maintains that there is nothing in either of water's component elements to account for these characteristics of water as a compound of these elements. He goes on to generalize this phenomenon:

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[1] PP, p. 90. [2] PA, p. 641.

> It is of interest to see that in the doctrine of emergence as the result of the combination of elements with one another *every* complex, as such, in so far as it is a resultant, at any time does bring with it something that was not there before.[1] (Italics mine.)

The objection might be raised that this phenomenon is so general as to be uninteresting--that it simply points to the way things must take place because of the nature of chemical elements. But Mead denies this point of view quite emphatically.

> Our statement in terms of emergence simply puts it as a resultant and does not give it any relationship to the process out of which it arose. When combinations arise, we are in a new world, but that new world has not any mechanical causal relationship to the world out of which it came.[2]

We will for the moment overlook the fact that Mead is really overstating his case here. (He cannot mean the emergent is without *any* relationship to the process out of which it arose, for not only is that a self-contradictory statement, but it also is in basic tension with the notion of relativity.) The point of emphasis is upon the manner in which the emergent transcends the notion of mechanical necessity. The emergent is not rendered inevitable by the conditions prevailing in the situation as it was prior to its emergence. It emerges as a novel and unexpected form.

It is helpful at this point to recall to mind the relative character of the universe in Mead's view. The structures and identities of being are the products of complex situations or fields of interrelatedness in which each component element influences every other element. A difference introduced at one point in a situation affects the character of the whole. This is why the emergence of the novel results in a "new world."[1] Reality is comprised of an indeterminate number of such situations, each of which represents a stratification of "the" universe from a different point of view or perspective. These perspectives are carved out of all that might conceivably become a part of them by the selective activity of living forms of existence. In this way all of reality is responsive to life, and may be said to be meaningful. That reality is meaningful simply signifies that it is relevant to the conduct or experience of the life form which is one aspect of the total situation comprising that reality. This can be restated as signifying that the reality of any object or complex structure of objects includes its meaning in experience. The relevance of this brief review to the discussion of emergence is that it places the emergent in an entire context or situation. Within this entire situation there may be factors which undergo changes which are in fact of a mechanical nature. But the effect of such changes in experience may be entirely novel--an emergent. Conversely, changes in the complexity of the apparatus of experience may result in the discovery of a great number of previously hidden dimensions of a situation which in many respects has remained quite static. That which emerges does so in experience, and this means in a total life-environment context. There may be aspects of this total context which are necessary and predictable, but the emergent--the product of the whole situation--is contingent and unpredictable.[2]

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[1] *PA*, p. 641.

[2] *PA*, p. 641.

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[1] PA, p. 641.

[2] See above, pp. 55-57.

All this is perhaps a rather round about way of making the point that an emergent form is novel in only some of its aspects. In other aspects it manifests a continuity with the situation out of which it has emerged. Both continuity and discontinuity are exhibited in an instance of emergence, and in Mead's judgment the task of bringing them into congruence is the major philosophical task of the day.[1] We may recall from the discussion of evolution that the determination of the identity of a thing is partially "causal," conforming to a given set of conditions, and partially "logical," responding to the future-oriented selective activity of a living form.[2] Causal determination represents the dimension of the emergent that is continuous with the conditions to which the emergent must conform, while logical determination injects an unknown future element into that which is emerging--an element of novelty. Mead expresses this relation of continuity and discontinuity in this fashion:

> That which is novel can emerge, but *conditions of the emergence are there*. . . . The conditioning, spatiotemporally considered, is *the necessity of continuity of relationship in space-time* and of characters which are dependent upon space-time, such as velocities and momenta. *The discontinuous is the novel*.[3] (Italics mine.)

He goes on to show how the "so-called uniformities of nature" represent another set of continuities along with space-time. But because the life-activities of living organisms stretch forward into the future that has not yet taken place, forms may emerge which are in fact novel. Mead elaborates on this in another place:

> In the undetermined future of action a new object, a new *terminus ad quem*, can arise, the necessity of which cannot be said to exist

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[1] *PP*, p. 14. [2] See above, pp. 55-57. [3] *SW*, pp. 346-347.

> in the conditions to which it must conform. . . . The novel element may be very slight, especially in comparison with the given world within which it appears, but in the experience of the individual it was not involved as a necessity of its past. . . . This amounts to the affirmation that all the novelties of living experiences are as novelties essential parts in the universe in accordance with the notion of relativity; the fact that when they arose they were unpredictable means that in the universe as then existing they were not determinable, nor in the universe as then existing did there exist the conditions that were the sufficient reasons for their appearing.[1]

Thus every instance of emergence involves elements that are both continuous and discontinuous with the phase of the evolutionary process just prior to that phase in which emergence occurs. Now what this amounts to is that whatever does happen, even the emergent, happens under determining conditions. . . but that these conditions never determine completely the "what it is" that will happen.[2]

Mead goes on to analyze the discontinuous element in this way:

> There seem to be two phases of this novelty. [A) One is found in the difference, shading from almost complete imperceptibility to utter strangeness, between anticipatory imagery of the result of the act and the actual experience. While this difference is unpredictable, we assume that the conditions for it can, after its appearance, be found in the analysis of the situation as it exists. The difference is never of an irrational character, but its rational character does not imply that the conditions of what is novel in it existed in the previous experience, though the structure of that experience can be now assimilated to the structure of the present experience. [B] The other phase of novelty is found in the hypothetical structure of a future situation, when a conflict of the tendencies to action present [sic] an essential problem for which a solution is sought. A theoretically complete analysis of the situation as it existed before the problem arose would not involve the reconstruction that takes place, though it would present the conditions to which any such hypothesis must conform. That this hypothetical structure will be found to belong to the future situation depends upon the success of the action it implies, i.e., upon experiment. The

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[1] PA, pp. 419-420.

[2] PP, p. 14.

> hypothetical structure itself, however, is a novelty that could not be deduced from the former experience as it existed.[1]

To the extent that these two descriptions actually represent "phases" of novelty, the second must be regarded as temporally prior to the first. A problem arises which must be solved, but the course of activity to be undertaken is yet to be chosen. When this decision is actually made, the hypothetical future it represents will of course have to conform to certain conditions inherent in the situation--to certain "brute facts," as it were. But the hypothesis itself transcends anything that could be said to follow the necessity from these conditions. The other phase of novelty is that which emerges between what is intended in a certain course of action and what is actually achieved. The achievement is always something other than it was anticipated to be, and this discrepancy is not due to faulty analysis of the situation. Something new and discontinuous emerges which could not have been anticipated in all its dimensions.

Once it has emerged, it is discovered that it does in fact conform to the previous situation *as that situation is now perceived from the new perspective created by the emergent*. But this exhibited continuity was not the necessary implication of the situation as it was structured in the previous perspective. The most that can be said is that the continuity with the past retrospectively revealed after emergence has occurred existed only as a hypothetical possibility or else as a totally unexperienced (and therefore unreal) dimension of the world. In other words, the condition to which the novel emergent

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[1] *PA*, p. 420.

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may in retrospect be said to have conformed are themselves emergents. Conditions exist in nature for the construction of a nuclear bomb, but it would be entirely unrealistic to suggest that they "existed" prior to the emergence of the universe as it was restructured in Einstein's mathematical equations. For whom could such conditions be said to have existed? Only for someone who completely transcends the limitations of historical existence, and such a possibility is excluded in Mead's world-view. Similarly, conditions undoubtedly "exist" in nature today which will be sufficient to "cause" a great number of phenomena which may emerge in the future. But they will not exist in the Meadian sense until the emergent phenomena actually take place, and the uncertainty of the future is such that these conditions cannot be said to make such emergence a necessity. The scientific community may or may not be able to synthesize recognizable life forms in their laboratories. If they are successful in this endeavor, the "causes" or reasons why will be apparent. But they are not currently apparent, and thus they do not currently exist. The course of evolutionary development is not, in other words, preprogrammed. The future is open to the occurrence of that which by the standards of present experience is novel, unpredictable, and discontinuous. But the discontinuity of the future does not represent a hiatus. The emergent future is attended by a reconstruction or reintegration of reality which dissolves the discontinuity insofar as it now belongs to the past. Emergence belongs solely and exclusively to the future dimensions of what is currently taking place.[1]

Emergence and the Event

All of reality, being located in perspectives and evolving into newer perspectives, belongs to the category of that which is "taking place." Reality is in the process of becoming what it is to be. Mead analyzes this becoming in terms of the concepts of "passage" and "events." Emergence occurs in the events which differentiate passage. An analysis of this relationship will perhaps be helpful in understanding the notion of emergence.

The term "passage" may be said to refer to the character of interconnectedness experienced in the process of becoming which is reality. Mead refers to this interconnectedness as a "temporal extension," although this is somewhat misleading in that the notion of time involves events in their concretion, while the notion of passage is actually derived through a process of abstraction from the concreteness of the events constituting reality.[2]

> There is an unalterable temporal direction in what is taking place. . . . There is a certain temporal process going on in experience. What has taken place issues in what is taking place, and in this passage what has occurred determines spatio-temporally what is passing into the future.[3]

The emphasis here is upon continuity--upon the way in which successive experiences flow into one another and upon the manner in which the relations constituting reality are carried on into the future.

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[1] It will subsequently be shown that the concept of "the past" always refers to a current construction, and thus that "the" past is itself an emergent.

[2] PA, p. 66. See also PA, pp. 262, 344 and PP, p. 33.

[3] PP, p. 13.

Mead elaborates this position in another place:

> In this continuity of experience there is distinction of happening. There is direction. There is dependence or conditioning. What is taking place flows out of that which is taking place. Not only does succession take place, but there is a succession of contents. What is going on would be otherwise if the earlier stage of the occurrence had been of a different character. It is always a passage of something. There is always a character which connects different phases of the passage, and the earlier stage of the happening is the condition of the later stage. Otherwise there would be no passage. Mere juxtaposition of events, if this is conceivable, would not constitute passage. The connection involves both identity and difference, and it involves that in the identity which makes the condition for that which follows. The immediate position of a moving body is conditioned by that which preceded it. Continuity is involved as a presupposition in passage in experience.[1]

The continuity of the passage of one reality into another is of crucial importance to Mead, for it is what rescues the whole notion of causality from the criticism leveled against it by David Hume.

> The basis of the determination of the future by the past is found in the fact that something is taking place which has a temporal spread--that reality cannot be reduced to instants--and that earlier stages must be conditions of later phases.[3]

Hume had attempted to reduce the experience of the world to a series of discrete and instantaneous impressions upon the mind. From this viewpoint the notion of causality is dissolved and its place is taken by a simple empirical description of a succession of certain impressions of the world. Mead denies that this is an adequate description of reality on the grounds that it ignores the fact that

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[1] SW, p. 346.

[2] Treatise on Human Nature, Book I.

[3] PP, p. 33.

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passage in experience is a real relation. In the relation of passage, a whole--the future toward which the passage is moving--determines each of its parts. Something is going on in passage, and this something that is going on involves the determination of one moment by another. What one perceives is an entire passage, not merely a succession of discrete mental impressions.[1] There is a quantum dimension to the flux of what is going on.

The quantum that passes is the "event." The event may in a sense be said to be the ultimate quantitative unit in the universe.[2] However, an event has no metaphysical identity of its own apart from the concrete processes of existence. Mead defines an event simply as "that which becomes."[3] An event "has no other character except that it passes and may be the seat of a contingent quality as well as of a timeless object which does not pass."[4] Because they lack all determination, events are:

> . . . the most highly abstract of all entities. They are not the ultimate stuff of reality, the noumenal reality of which our experience is an appearance. They are the final abstractions which we make in comparing experiences which are as diverse as we can conceive them to be.[5]

Thus an event is simply the statement of bare happening, and as such has no existence in and of itself. And yet the event is the unit of passage and serves to differentiate passage into discrete phases or quanta. How is this to be understood?

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[1] PA, pp. 85-86, 636, 650.

[2] PP, p. 110; PA, pp. 321, 323, 423.

[3] PP, p. 21. See also PP, p. 1.

[4] PA, p. 67. See also PA, p. 423.

[5] PA, p. 423.

Mead's answer is that the event as an abstract category is the seat of emergence--the emergence of some novel concrete form of existence which, in its concretion, differentiates that event from the occurrence or passage of all other events. An event is not simply a part of passage. It is rather characterized by its "uniqueness."[1] That which occurs in any given event is of such a character that it cannot be accounted for solely in terms of the conditions to which that event has conformed in its becoming. Mead is quite explicit in this point:

> I will not say that we cannot conceive of a passage within which nothing happens [Mead speculated that in some instances animal experience may be of such a character], but I do make bold to say that every event by which it becomes possible to differentiate passage must have a unique character which cannot be resolved into the conditions under which the event happens. The attempt so to resolve it leads. . . to identical equations and a changeless Parmenidean block of reality.[2]

That which emerges in the event makes it possible for the passage of reality to be experienced in determinate phases, each of which is clearly distinguishable from the others. In this sense the emergent event gives shape or form to the world. When the event as "that which becomes" has taken place, it is experienced as a "thing." A "thing" is the fully determinate form of an event--the event as it has "solidified" or reached the terminus of its duration, and has become a fixed condition for the emergence of subsequent things in subsequent events.[3] One never knows what an event is until it has become such a determinate thing.

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[1] *PP*, p. 33. [2] *PP*, p. 38. See also *PP*, p. 23.

[3] *PP*, pp. 36-37. See also *PP*, pp. 173-174; *PA*, pp. 635-638; *MT*, pp. 451-452.

It is thus the emergent dimension of an event which lies at the base of the differentiation of a passing reality into concrete, distinguishable objects and structures of objects. The concept of passage points to the dimension of continuity in this process of becoming. The concept of the emergent event points to the dimension of discontinuity. It is clear that Mead sees in the discontinuity of the emergent form a great mystery. Just what is taking place at any given time--what thing it is that is in the process of becoming--is always in the final analysis a surprise. Mead's analysis of the relative and emerging universe does, as we have seen, reveal certain "fixed" continuities or conditions which will be exhibited in that which is continually emerging. But these uniform characteristics of the universe are never, in his estimation, sufficient to account for what finally takes form in the emergent event. In other words, the notion of causality--the carrying on of relations in passage--is incomplete as a description of the processes of reality until it is extended beyond the confines of the past. What is taking place at any given moment is responsive not only to the past, but also to what Mead, borrowing from Whitehead, calls the "causal future."[1] The tale of causality is completely told only when it includes the inherently "precarious" future--the terminus toward which every event in process moves.[2] The increment of emergence--the novel addition which attends the event--belongs solely to this causal future. No one knows what this future is bringing until it arrives as a present in its concrete form. Until then it is wild and undisciplined, responsive both to the conditions of its emergence and to the selective or hypothesizing activity of living forms of being, but ever subject to the uncertainty attending the existence of alternative courses of action and the relation between the anticipated promise of a situation and its actual fulfillment. There is no way, from Mead's point of view, to factor out this element of uncertainty. It is an element of the "given." The future always emerges; it never follows as a matter of course. Any world-view or notion of causality which overlooks this dimension of becoming is in error.

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[1] PA, p. 636.

[2] PA, p. 175, 636.

But it must be noted that it would be similarly erroneous to ignore the fact that there is also a dimension to becoming which does at least appear to follow as a matter of course from the past. This has already been discussed in terms of continuity, causality, and the determinate inter-connectedness exhibited in passage. It has perhaps not been made clear, however, just how it is that what is constantly in passage can be experienced as permanent. The causality effected by the past works forward in time into the present. In this manner certain aspects of reality, e.g., spatio-temporal relations and the uniform "laws" of nature, seem to exhibit no emergent dimensions even though they are aspects of a reality which, considered as a whole, passes into an emergent configuration. The question is how this permanent dimension of what is in passage is to be understood.

It must be made clear from the outset that the so-called

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permanent dimensions of reality are in fact passing in Mead's view. He regards this to be an inescapable conclusion if the notion of relativity is valid as a description of the world.

> There being no position eternally pegged down that could not from another watchtower be seen to move, we come back to the recognition of what has already been confirmed--that the universe is made up of passing events which fall into different perceptual, or spatiotemporal, situations that determine their objects. What the theory of relativity has elicited is that this holds even of the spatiotemporal characters of objects in the perceptual world.[1]

Elsewhere he writes: ". . . all extension is temporal as well as spatial, and *there is therefore no space that does not pass*."[2] (Italics mine.) Passage is thus to be understood as a universal or generic characteristic of the entire universe and all objects and continuous relationships contained within it. This affirmation of universal passage is one of the points where Mead felt constrained to part company with Whitehead, with whom he found himself in most instances to be in agreement. Mead interpreted Whitehead's position as leading to the conclusion that objects in nature (such as the great pyramids) do not pass, and offered his own counter-interpretation of relativity which we are now considering.[3] All the permanencies of the world do pass, according to Mead. The fact of their passage does not, however, rob them of their permanence.

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[1] *PA*, p. 605.

[2] *PA*, p. 592. See also *PA*, pp. 533, 570.

[3] *PA*, pp. 337, 354-356. Concerning Mead's relationship to Whitehead in general, Arthur Murphy (*PP*, p. 10n.) points out that Mead was not conversant with Whitehead's *Process and Reality* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1929). This is a factor to be borne in mind when Mead uses Whiteheadian terminology or attempts in some way to distinguish his own position from that of Whitehead.

Reality is a process which takes place along certain "routes."[1] These routes of passage have characteristics which remain constant, and these constant dimensions of a route of passage are experienced as the permanent relations or structures of the universe. Thus an object is a relationship in passage; a law of nature is the continuity of a mass in its historical route; and the concept of mass itself simply refers to a quality inhering in a certain route of passage.[2] Each such route exhibits a repetitive pattern of relationships which appear to be eternal and unchanging. But Mead suggests they are not.

> Enduring does not exclude passage. Repetition of a pattern, in so far as the pattern is then irrelevant to passage, expresses endurance as adequately as an entity whose nature lies outside of passage, nor does irrelevance itself posit such eternal natures or objects.[3]

That a pattern is "irrelevant to passage" simply means that the fact of its passing does not alter its organized or patterned structure. The structure which it is passes over into an identical structure, so that, in a manner of speaking, it succeeds itself. Such a structure of relationships is experienced as being at rest, but actually this experience of rest is the experience of homologous positions in spaces which pass successively into one another.[4]

Such passing spaces, with their permanencies, may themselves be organized into a whole. This whole would not appear to be in passage because it represents the abstraction of identical sets of spatial relationships from the plurality of smaller spaces it embraces.[1] Scientific and metaphysical world-views are of such a character. But in the final analysis the structure of such a world-view is dependent upon that which repeats itself in passage. When emergence occurs at some point, the fact of passage is no longer irrelevant. The pattern then does not exactly repeat itself, and the structure is revised accordingly. The Newtonian world-view, for example was based upon a repetitive structure or series of spatial routes of passage. The results of certain experiments in physics, however, indicated some spatial patterns which were non-repetitive of the Newtonian structure. Reconstruction of the Newtonian view occurred with the emergence of the Einsteinian world-view, and there is no reason to suppose that still another emergent structure will not succeed Einstein's.

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[1] PA, p. 648.

[2] PA, pp. 647-648.

[3] PA, p. 117.

[4] PA, p. 594.

Whether a pattern will repeat itself or not--or for that matter, whether or not there will be an experience either of change or of permanence--is dependent upon the structure of particular perspectives.

> The assimilation of time to space, and the disappearance of any absolute time and space, carries us back to a situation of the passage of events in a space-time in which there are intersections of various time systems that give rise to passing repeating geometrical structures, whose points are historical routes, and in which there is no permanent space and, hence, no motion, *until relation to a percipient or prehensive event gives rise to a consentient set, or a perspective*; . . .[2] (Italics mine.)

The Whiteheadian terms "percipient event" and "prehensive event" are in Mead's usage synonymous with the term "individual."[3] Certain individuals (human social individuals, as will subsequently be made clear) are able to arrest passage and, in the perspective that is thus experienced, are able to have a permanent world against which both to perceive and to initiate change.

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[1] *PA*, p. 594.

[2] *PA*, pp. 146-147.

[3] *PA*, p. 337.

Mead elsewhere explains the relation between passage and permanence in a perspectival universe as follows:

> In space-time the most persistent of patterns is still passing, even if it continually repeats itself. If this repetition be stiffened into unchanging existence, it is because the percipient event [i.e., the social individual] in a series of events that remain unchanged for it finds in this scene the possibility of various alternative activities, each one of which will present a different perspective, though they all lie within a spatial pattern whose endurance abstracts from the passage they involve. The percipient event finds in a permanent space the condition for mapping out among different possibilities a plan of action.[1]

Thus nature attains an organized structure in the mind of the human social individual when that individual reflects upon his ensuing action. One should not be put off by this reference to the human mind, for in Mead's view the mind reflects what is actually there in the world, and whatever passage that takes place in the mind through successive perspectives is indicative of a real passage in nature.[2] The natural order is, after all, an organization of perspectives.[3] These perspectives are the only reality. The individual exists within the perspective; the perspective--even though embodying the special viewpoint of the individual--does not exist within the individual.[4] The permanencies of nature--the conditions to which subsequent emergent realities must conform--are experienced in the establishment of individual perspectives.

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[1] PA, p. 185.

[2] PP, pp. 80-81.

[3] MT, p. 315. See above, p. 30.

[4] PA, pp. 107, 110-111, 183.

The Philosophy of the Present

Notation of the perspectival character of the permanent conditions of emergence provides a clue for understanding Mead's "philosophy of the present," which includes the somewhat strange-sounding assertion that the past is as hypothetical or emergent as the future.[1] His basic thesis is that "reality exists in a present," or as he later rephrases it, "a reality that transcends the present must exhibit itself in the present."[2] A "present" embodies a perspective. It is the experience of an emergent event in which something occurs which gives subsequent events a content which they would not have had were it not for this instance of emergence. Its duration is relative to what is occurring, and Mead expresses it in Whiteheadian terms as "a period long enough for the object to be what it is."[3] This present is a prophecy, in that it is moving toward a future, as yet unknown, but nevertheless selected by the percipient event or individual. The concretization of this future marks the becoming of a new thing, a new perspective, an emergent, and also the passage of the present into the past. But the present is a history as well as a prophecy, in that it is related to those events which have preceded its occurrence. This relation is called the past. The past conditions the present, as we have seen, but the present selects its own past just as much as it selects its future. That is, the past is perspectival in character, just as all of reality is perspectival in character. The past is a particular stratification of the universe, and it derives that particularity from the uniqueness of the emergent event which marks the temporal span of the present. To understand this is also to understand how an emergent form, by definition discontinuous with its past, is reintegrated with its past so that it becomes continuous.

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[1] PP, p. 12.

[2] PP, pp. 1, 11.

[3] PP, p. 23.

From one point of view it would appear that the past is a fixed structure that is simply "there," for it is difficult to see how that which has already taken place can take on emergent dimensions like that which is currently taking place. But Mead denies the existence of such a fixed and unchanging past.[1] Nothing in the relative universe stands outside of its relationships with everything else. The relationship of the past is to the present--to that perspective which stratifies the past and gives it meaning. Mead does not deny that there is an irrevocability to the past. What has occurred has occurred, and there is no way either to undo it or to redo it. But whereas the past is irrevocable in its "thatness," it is highly revocable in its "whatness."[2] Apart from its position in some present perspective the past has no meaning. It stands outside of the realm of experience, and thus outside the realm of consideration. To be meaningful the past must be brought into relation with the present, and when this is done the revocability of the irrevocable past becomes apparent. The writers of history and experimental scientists know this. Mead notes how historians write their histories and scientists reflect on the rational order of the universe knowing full well that later histories and scientific hypotheses will differ in some respects from their own. But they do their work anyhow, according to the evidence and methodologies available to them. The metaphysical postulate of the existence of a fixed, irrevocable and independent past--or the denial of such a postulate--is irrelevant to the day to day conduct of those for whom the nature of the past is important.[1] Their only option is to work from the perspective of the present.

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[1] PP, pp. 1, 7-8.

[2] PP, pp. 2-3.

The world which is there in the present perspective of the human social individual always includes its past.[2] This past is irrevocably there as "what must have been" if the present has the character it is perceived to have.[3] That is, the past is the necessary explanation of this particular present, the set of conditions which explain why this present is as it is. In Mead's own words:

> The past is an overflow of the present. It is oriented from the present. . . . its decisive character is the pushing back of the conditioning continuities of the present. The past is what must have been before it is present in experience as a past.[4]

But it must be emphasized that the past is the explanation of this present, of this particular perspective which is marked by the uniqueness of its own viewpoint and by the uniqueness of that aspect of reality which is emerging in the event which this present spans. Thus it is that the irrevocable past--the necessary explanation of the present--is discovered in the emergent perspectives of succeeding presents to be highly revocable. "Like railway timetables," Mead rather whimsically notes, "it is always subject to change without notice. Christ was born four years before A.D."[1]

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[1] PP, pp. 7, 11-12.

[2] PP, p. 5.

[3] PP, pp. 16, 33.

[4] SW, pp. 348-349.

Something emerges in a present which was not an aspect of the world before. This entails a reconstruction or reintegration of reality. That is what an event or an instance of becoming is--the restructuring of reality by the integration of the conditioning past and the causal future. This restructuring of reality includes a past. It has a history which explains how it came to be. But it is the history of a new reality, not the history of the reality preceding it. In this history, that which emerged out of the old reality in discontinuity with it now exhibits continuity with reality in this new perspective. The emergent is no longer emergent when seen from the new perspective it has created. This is what Mead has in mind when he says:

> . . . the present in which the emergent appears accepts that which is novel as an essential part of the universe, and from that standpoint rewrites its past. The emergent then ceases to be emergent and follows from the past which has replaced the former past.[2] (Italics mine.)
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> The past which we construct from the standpoint of the new problem of today is based upon continuities which we discover in that which has arisen, and its [sic] serves us until the rising novelty of tomorrow necessitates a new history which interprets

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[1] PP, p. 27.

[2] PP, p. 11. See also p. 27.

> the new future. All that emerges has continuity, but not until it does so emerge.[1] (Italics mine.)

Reality is thus in the final analysis a continuous affair, but only because it exists in a present which is marked by the integration of the new and the old. The continuity exhibited by reality is discovered only in retrospect. When one looks back into the past, everything fits in orderly relation. But one never looks twice into the same past. "The past consists of the relations of the earlier world to an emergent affair--relations which have therefore emerged with the affair."[2] The future is truly open, transcending every attempt to extend this retrospective continuity forward in time. No one can say in any particular present just what the future will bring. One can only say that the arrival of the future will be attended by the arrival of a new past. The past emerges with each emergent present, as the interpretation of that present. So it was that the arrest of Marquette Fry on a hot evening for erratic driving on a West Los Angeles street represented one past a few minutes after it occurred. But as events began rapidly to succeed one another this past took on emergent dimensions, until from a present perspective it is known as the event which marked the beginning of the infamous Watts riot. Similarly, the decision of the United States of America to utilize nuclear weapons against Japan meant one thing from the perspective of the signing of Japan's surrender on the deck of the battleship *Missouri* in 1945. It means perhaps quite a different thing from the perspective of present world politics. Examples can be multiplied indefinitely. No one can accurately predict what the emergent future will bring, and when that future has arrived, no one can estimate its effect upon subsequent futures, for which it serves as a conditioning past. The past is as emergent as the future it interprets, and both have their reality only in a present.

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[1] *SW*, p. 353.

[2] *SW*, p. 354.

Emergence and the Individual

The consideration of Mead's "philosophy of the present" (which is actually nothing more nor less than an expansion of the notion of relativity) makes it apparent that in some fundamental way the emergent owes its existence to something in the present. This is not to deny that, as something that is becoming, the locus of the emergent is in the future. But one may legitimately ask how the emergent gets into the future. Mead's answer is that the existence of the emergent in the future is grounded in the activity of the human social individual in the present. That is where the evolutionary process now cuts its way into the unknown future. This has been suggested here and there in the preceding pages, but the specific role of the human social individual is deserving of special attention.

Reality is perspectival in character. Any alterations in the structure of reality--any passage which occurs--makes its appearance in a new perspective. The new perspective is the new reality, and it is always the perspective _of_ _some_ _individual_. The role of the individual in emergence is foundational. Mead says of the individual:

> He has a certain preciousness which cannot be estimated. You cannot tell what will happen to him, what must happen to him.

> . . . There is something that takes place in his perspective that does not occur for anybody else. Each one of us has an outlook on the universe which belongs to each one of us alone. . .[1]

The emergent is integrated into reality in the unique perspective of the individual. It is his problem-solving activity which casts the emergent into the future out of which it takes form.

> This common world is continually breaking down. Problems arise in it and demand solution. They appear as the exceptions to which I have referred above [conflicting meanings which bring conduct to a halt]. The exceptions appear first of all in the experience of individuals. . . . The experience of the individual is precious because it preserves these exceptions.[2]

The response of the individual to the exceptional, that is, the course of action he adopts in hopes of integrating the exception into that view of reality which he already has so that he may continue to act, is novel. It is a response that is unpredictable and uncertain--an emergent response that in some respects transcends even the individual's own ability to estimate, for the possibilities of the individual self belong to what is currently taking place.[3] He is often surprised himself at what he has done. But with his emergent responses to problematic situations the individual stamps the pattern of his own ever-developing self upon the whole of human society, and becomes an instance of the creative advance of nature itself.[4] His choice, his hypothesis, the result of his purposeful and thoughtful existence is concretized in the world; and the world is a different affair because of it. Sometimes this difference is very minute, while at other times it is more significant. Sometimes the alteration effected by the individual is progressive, creative of value; but at other times it is regressive, destructive of value. At all times, however, the contribution of the individual to emerging reality is a structural element of that reality.

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[1] MT, p. 411.

[2] SW, p. 341.

[3] MSS, pp. 176-177, 204.

[4] MSS, pp. 263, 386-387.

Emergence and Social Reality

The fact of the emergence of a new order of reality in the present of an individual indicates to Mead the social character of reality.[1] The emergent event is an instance of sociality because, while the event is in process, it belongs simultaneously to two different orders. That is, what is taking form in the present belongs at once to its conditioning past and its emerging future. There is in the duration of the present no dividing point which separates the old order of things from the emergent order. Instead there is a process of adjustment during which it must be said that what is emerging lies in both orders.[2] Mead emphasizes the social character of this stage "betwixt and between" the old system and the new system because he wants to make clear that the notion of sociality is not to be identified merely with system, meaning by "system" the emergent structure of reality as it is concretized and has become a part of the conditioning past.[3]

> If emergence is a feature of reality this phase of adjustment, which comes between the ordered universe before the emergent has arisen and that after it has come to terms with the newcomer, must be a feature also of reality.[4]

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[1] Mead's most systematic treatment of the notion of sociality is to be found in PP, ch. 3.

[2] PP, p. 47. [3] PP, p. 47. [4] PP, p. 47.

This phase of adjustment occurs within the perspective of someone's present. It is something that happens within a particular stratification of reality. But it is to be emphasized once more that there is no reality which is not a particular stratification or perspective of a world that is, to be sure, "there" apart from such stratification, but without meaning. The perspective is the reality, and if the perspective manifests a social situation, that social situation must be there in the world.[1]

What, specifically, does Mead intend to signify by the term "sociality"? One of his summarizing statements is as follows:

> Now the principle of sociality that I am attempting to enunciate is that in the present within which emergent change takes place the emergent object belongs to different systems in its passage from the old to the new because of its systematic relationship with other structures, and possesses the characters it has because of its membership in these different systems.[2]

His one-line definition of this principle is: "Sociality is the capacity of being several things at once."[3] The term "capacity" is perhaps misleading, in that it may connote a determinate thing which may be located in various contexts. This is not, in my estimation, what Mead is attempting to convey. He is rather suggesting that the "same" portion of the world which is "there" indeterminately may exist in several determinate forms simultaneously, depending upon how it is variously stratified in different perspectives. The manifestation of this occurs in the present in which emergence occurs. Any present includes a variety of possibilities, perhaps only one of which will emerge in concretion, but perhaps several of which might have so emerged. These possibilities, Mead is saying, are real aspects of the world. Furthermore, the "same" area or part of the world may be stratified simultaneously in a number of perspectives. In such an instance, Mead is saying, the part of the world in question really is all of the identities or determinate forms it achieves in each of the perspectives in which it appears--it is literally several things at once.

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[1] PP, p. 48. [2] PP, p. 65. See also PA, p. 610. [3] PP, p. 49.

But this still does not exhaust the meaning of the principle of sociality. It is true that the fact of emergence reveals a situation in which the "same" object may be said to occupy two or more systems at once, so that "it" is really a plurality of objects. Mead calls this "sociality as given in immediate relation of the past and present."[1] But Mead goes on to point out a second "aspect" or "dimension" of the principle of sociality, and this he refers to as the "systematic" character of the passing present.[2] Whereas the aspect of sociality which has been considered thus far refers primarily to particular objects as they appear in successive or simultaneous perspectives, this second aspect of sociality refers primarily to the relativity characterizing these perspectives as a whole and the way in which these more complex relations pass into the future. Mead puts it this way:

> The point is that a body belonging to a system, and having its nature determined by its relations to members of that system, when it passes into a new systematic order will carry over into its

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[1] PP, p. 51.

[2] PP, pp. 51-52. See also PA, p. 609.

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> process of readjustment in the new system something of the nature of all members of the old.[1] (Italics mine.)

In this way reality may be said to be cumulative. An emergent perspective must account for all aspects of the perspective out of which it has emerged, in addition to the increment of novelty it systematically introduces into that perspective. The relations obtaining in one reality are carried forward as conditions for the new reality, but readjusted in such a manner that they include the emergent aspect of the new reality. Thus the Newtonian laws of motion were not discarded with the advent of the Einsteinian universe. They were, however, relativized. The emergent Einsteinian world does exhibit these laws, but with less general application.

Mead illustrates this dimension of sociality by reference to the phenomenon of social change.[2] He points out how the socially determined characteristics of the old social order carry forward into the emerging order--there to be readjusted, of course, but nevertheless there. The old order is very much there in the emerging perspective of the revolutionary, and provides the revolutionary with the structure on the basis of which the new order is to be founded. Thus Rousseau had to find both (emergent) sovereign and (historical) subject in the citizen of his emergent social order. The function of rule was very much a component part of the old order, and is likewise essential to the new, albeit in a radically different form. Similarly, Mead says, Kant had to find in his "rational being" both (emergent) giver of the moral law and (historical) subject of the moral law. The relations of the past carry forward in time and appear as components of the emerging present, but always with some shade of difference due to the occurrence of emergence. Presumably this holds true even of those repetitious historical routes of passage which are experienced as permanent. The space-time dimensions of the Einsteinian world are for the most part experientially no less solid than they were in the Newtonian world, but they have lost their meaning of ultimacy. This makes them different, even when in the common perceptual world these differences are not at all apparent.

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[1] PP, p. 52. Later on in this same work (p. 77) Mead suggests that the difference between the two dimensions of sociality is temporal. There is the sociality revealed in passage wherein an object is a member of two divergent systems; and there is the sociality of a system taken at a fictional instant wherein the character of an object in the system is what it is because of its mutual relationships with all other member objects of the system.

[2] PP, p. 52.

Mead understands sociality to be a generic characteristic of reality, but he notes that the principle finds a slightly different application in what he calls three separate "fields" of sociality.[1] These three fields are demonstrative of the cumulative character of the real, and represent perhaps the three most important levels or stages of the evolutionary process. The first level is that revealed in the theory of relativity, wherein it has been shown with great exactness that emergent changes occur in relation to the velocity of a physical system. At this level, however, this exactness of emergent change can be experienced in only a handful of highly technical physical experiments.[2] The situation is quite different when one considers the second field of sociality, which is characterized by the emergence of life. The animate form injects a kind of teleology into the process of reality. "Emergent life changes the character of the world just as emergent velocities change the character of masses."[1] The animate form belongs as well to the inanimate system of the world, but the emergence out of the inanimate system of a bio-chemical process known as life has completely changed the shape of reality at this level. To the animate form belongs that aspect of nature known as the environment, and this meaningful environment owes its very existence to the selective activity of the animate form. The effects of living processes may be experienced everywhere, but unlike the case with respect to physical relativity, the emergence of life cannot be discerned with exactness. Mead, writing in 1930, could only say that the fact of such emergence confronts us as a *fait accompli*.[2] It must have happened, but we can only dimly trace the means by which it happened. The present state of research on this subject has evidently not materially challenged this estimate of the situation, although much more is now known about various types of life-connected substances and the highly complex structure of these substances than was known in Mead's day.[3]

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[1] PP, pp. 63-67.

[2] PP, p. 66.

The third field of sociality is that characterized by the

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[1] *PP*, p. 65.

[2] *PP*, p. 77.

[3] Tax, *Evolution after Darwin*, vol. I. See especially the article by Harlow Shapley entitled, "On the Evidences of Inorganic Evolution" and that by Hans Gaffron entitled, "The Origin of Life." See above, p. 60n2.

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emergence of reflexive consciousness or mind. Man belongs to the systems of the inanimate and the living as well, but his emergent ability to look both forward and backward in time introduces a whole new set of meanings and values into reality. Again, the experiential evidence of this kind of emergence abounds, and, unlike the case with respect to the emergence of life, one can theorize with some exactness as to how this emergence occurred. The degree of exactness does not approach that prevailing in the theory of relativity, but a plausible theory may be constructed. The bulk of chapter two of this dissertation will be devoted to an exposition of Mead's attempt to describe the emergence of mind and the sociality characterizing it. In the meantime we shall note that Mead views mind as "an evolution in nature, in which culminates that sociality which is the principle and the form of emergence."[1] Sociality is the principle of emergence, for if reality were not social in character--if it did not have the capacity to be several things at once--the emergent would be forced outside of the evolutionary process altogether. It would be an irruption from the outside, without any conditioning past. Sociality is also the form of emergence, for the emergent is always integrated into its past so that a new continuity is created along with it. The locus of all this is the human mind. The structure of the mind is the sociality of the present--that perspective in which new heavens and new earths are continually emerging.[2] This structure of the mind corresponds to the structure of reality.

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[1] PP, p. 85. [2] PP, p. 90.

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> The mind passes from one system of reality to the other in its so-called consciousness, and the world is a different world from the standpoint of one attitude from what it is from another. We say that the world cannot occupy both meanings, if they are mutually exclusive; but passage in a mind enables it to do so by means of transformations. All that we need to recognize is that the world had the one aspect from one point of view [perspective] and that it now has the other aspect from another point of view, and that there has been the same passage in nature from the one to the other as has taken place in the mind, just as there is passage from one price to another in the stocks on the market because of the changing attitudes in men's minds.[1]

The whole of reality, within the limitations of the conditioning past, is responsive to the activity of the human mind. The ability of mind to effect an emergent reality is due to its social structure. In his mind, man is able to occupy a plurality of perspectives at once, and for this reason man is the highest instance of sociality.

It is perhaps by now apparent that what Mead terms "sociality" is a construct of the generalizations which I have called "relativity" and "emergence." The two dimensions Mead sees in the principle of sociality are in effect statements of these two fundamental notions. The principle of sociality plays a very important role in Mead's thought, and this fact is illustrative of the manner in which the four notions which I am analyzing out as fundamental to his thought mesh together and shade off into one another almost imperceptibly. This intermeshing of the well-springs of Mead's outlook will perhaps also be apparent in the treatment of the fourth of their number, the notion of activity. It is in the activity of the human social individual, and the social activities of groups of individuals, that the relative universe is evolving into emergent forms.

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[1] PP, p. 80. The stock market illustration must have been quite telling in 1930!

Activity

The Notion in General

Each of the three fundamental notions thus far abstracted from Mead's thought has dealt with a particular characteristic of what has been variously designated as nature, the world, the universe, or reality.[1] The notion of relativity points to the situational character of reality. All objects and structures of objects achieve their several identities within fields of relatedness in which every area helps determine the form of other areas, and is in turn informed in conjunction with them. The notion of evolution illustrates the processive character of reality. The fields of relatedness which constitute the world are not eternal. Each of them represents a determinate phase of a process of development in which such fields are continually reconstructed as pressures and conflicts arise and are resolved. The notion of *emergence* emphasizes the novelty characterizing the qualities and forms which arise in the evolutionary process of becoming, and seeks to describe the manner in which such an emergent novelty is reintegrated into the process of reality as a whole so that it maintains continuity with it. This notion of *activity* serves Mead in the capacity of integrating the other three notions, and it will be the purpose of this section to describe how this is the case.

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[1] Mead's rather loose employment of these terms is only apparently imprecise. The fundamental reference of each is to an organization of perspectives. There is no suggestion that "nature" is a particular realm of being alongside of what is often termed the realm of "history," for nature itself is thoroughly historical. Nor is there a realm of "appearance" to be contrasted with a realm of "reality." Every appearance has reality within the confines of the perspective or organization of perspectives within which it appears. It is true that Mead often refers to the "world" as the indeterminate presupposition of perspectives, but in such cases he always qualifies the world he refers to as the world that is amorphously "there." The connotation of the term "universe" is perhaps a bit wider in extension than the term "world" but one cannot say, within the Meadian structure, that there is a single universe about which we know nothing and which encompasses our world and an indefinite number of others. One can only speak of such a universe insofar as it has entered into human experience, and in this respect it is no different from any particular world. In no way may any of these terms be construed as referring to an absolute structure transcending the realm of experience.

The reality picture presented by the notions of relativity, evolution, and emergence is incomplete. It is a picture of a reality that is continually happening--continually being reshaped into new configurations and patterns. Remaining to be answered, however, is the question of how distinguishable or determinate forms and structures are achieved amidst all of this flux. Relativity means that reality is situationally determined, but how are the boundaries of situations ascertained? Evolution involves the passage of events, but wherein lies the determinate character of these events? Emergence refers to the kind of causality that is resident in the future, but how does this future causality become effective in the present? Preliminary answers to these questions have been touched upon in the preceding pages, especially in the treatment of perspectives, of consentience, and of Mead's philosophy of the present.[1] But the questions still remain. What lies behind the achievement of consentience, of a perspective, or of a present? What the picture lacks is a description of that

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[1] See above, pp. 28-31, 41-45, 97-102.

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relationship, itself a process, within which process is arrested and the determinate forms of the world are established. This relationship Mead calls the act, and much of his work is given over to the way in which the act is the context of reality.

Activity is the characteristic of that stage of the evolutionary process in which life has emerged, and of all stages subsequent to it. Emergent life is active, according to Mead. "In the simplest situation the organism is there acting or in action, and the character of stimuli are there."[1] This activity is not an optional matter for [illegible] living organism. It is its fundamental relation to its potential world. Life is from its inception "on the way." This is the teleological character of activity. Activity has reference to a future condition, stretching forward into a world that does not yet exist for it.[2] The living form is basically and continually doing something (seeking food, for example), and this goal of its activity, excited within the nervous system or other analogous system of the form itself, sensitizes that form to respond to those stimuli which will lead to the goal.[3] The environment or world of the living form emerges in its responses to the stimuli to which it has been sensitized. A world of meanings--certainly not conscious, but meanings nevertheless--arises as the organism consummates its act. All perspectives and organizations of perspectives emerge out of the context of this life-environment relation which Mead calls activity. This is the fundamental situation for the attainment of a meaningful world. It cannot be transcended. Apart from the goal-oriented activity of living forms there would be no such meaningful world.

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[1] _PA_, p. 144.

[2] _PA_, pp. 25, 65, 340, 417.

[3] _PA_, p. 24.

The emergence out of human activity of the kind of meaningful world which we commonly speak of is of course a vastly complex process. Before embarking upon an outline of Mead's theory as to how this is accomplished, however, I would like to make one further comment of a general nature concerning the notion of activity as it is found in Mead.

Mead discusses the notion of activity as it is manifested by living forms. This apparently gives it less generality than the other three notions that have been discussed. Relativity and evolution are clearly characteristic of inorganic phases of existence. The very fact that life itself is an emergent from some inorganic phase means that these phases too are characterized by emergence, although it has been noted that Mead has very little to say about that.[1] But Mead also has very little to say concerning the notion of activity and the inorganic realm. There are hints here and there which suggest that this connection could perhaps be made, but by and large Mead confines his interest in the notion of activity to human activity. Thus the generalization of activity in the inorganic realm constitutes one of the unfinished tasks in Mead's thought. This does not, of course, diminish the fundamental role of the notion of activity as an organizing principle in Mead's thinking. It simply represents an area in which Mead evidently did not pursue his insights to their full systematic limits. More will be said concerning this matter at the conclusion of this section, but it seems appropriate to note this difference at the outset.

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[1] See above, pp. 60, 109.

Characteristics of Activity

Perhaps the basic characteristic of activity is its selective function. Mead describes an act as "an impulse that maintains the life-process by the selection of certain sorts of stimuli it needs. Thus, the organism creates its environment."[1] Note well how this power of selection comes from the impulse of the life form. This is the emergent dimension of life. It is true that an impulse needs something other than itself in order to be carried through, but it is equally true that the impulse of which he speaks belongs solely to the living form. There is nothing mechanical about this relationship, even though the language of stimulus and response is frequently employed by Mead. Not everything in the world that is there as the potential environment of the organism can serve as a stimulus. When Mead speaks of a "stimulus" he is referring to a function of the impulse which a living form is seeking to express. His definition of a stimulus is "the occasion for the expression of the impulse."[2] The impulse which initiates an act is thus responsible for creating what may be called a field of selection. The organism is sensitized by its impulse to glean from this field that which will serve this impulse.

In accordance with the notion of evolution, the act which is born of an impulse is itself a process involving successive phases.[3]

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[1] __MSS__, p. 6, n.5.

[2] __MSS__, p. 6, n.5. See also __PA__, p. [illegible]64.

[3] __PA__, pp. 23-25.

It contains no static elements. Nevertheless, the act does have certain definable boundaries. It is a temporal whole with a beginning and an end. The act begins with an impulse, and it ends with the satisfaction of consummation of that impulse.[1] This comsummation is a state of enjoyment, so to speak. What is sought is found. The impulse of hunger moves through an indefinite number of mediatory phases until it is satisfied with food. This brings the act initiated by hunger to a close. Or conversely--and this is a dimension of the act which Mead seems to have neglected--the impulse is not consummated with food, but comes to rest nevertheless with the occurrence of death. Other impulses may pass away short of their consummation when they are superseded by different impulses which initiate alternative acts. The end of an act belongs to the realm of values, and values are neither all positive nor all achieved. But in any case, an act does come to a recognizable terminus. Thus Mead's definition of the act runs like this: "An act is an ongoing event that consists of stimulation and response and the results of the response."[2] The framework of an act is actually a dialectic process. Stimuli which are responsive to an impulse arise in an environment. Then a response to these stimuli occurs under the direction of the impulse. Finally the environment responds to the response of the organism by granting or withholding the value or values which will satisfy the impulse. The notion of relativity is much in evidence here. Organism and environment mutually select and modify one another in a process of continual adjustment.

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[1] PA, pp. 23-25.

[2] PA, p. 364.

The notion of activity thus refers to a process within which selection of an environment takes place, and Mead refers to the particular act or selective event as "the unit of existence."[1] This designation is to be taken at face value. It is Mead's position that whatever is known to exist, is so known in the context of activity. "Things are what they are in the relationship between the individual and his environment, and this relationship is that of conduct."[2] It is in the relationship of conduct that perspectives come into being.[3] The world is stratified by the living form in accordance with what that form is attempting to do. If aspects of the world, which from another perspective can be shown to be there for an organism as potential components of its world, do not actually become a part of that world, the reason lies in their irrelevance to the act or acts in progress. To return to an earlier illustration, a two-by-four may appear in the perspectives of both a termite and a man, however, with a different meaning for both. For the termite it is a food source, and for the man it is the support for his mailbox. It has a function in both perspectives. But the mailbox is a part of the perspective of the man only. This is because a mailbox is not functional for a termite. He cannot eat it, and he certainly does not receive mail. Therefore the structure of the world as it is stratified from the point of view of the termite contains no mailbox. The dimensions of any given reality structure are exactly as broad or as narrow as the scope and complexity of the activities of the individuals who share that perspective in common.[1]

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[1] PA, p. 65. [2] PA, p. 218. See also p. 223.

[3] For the primary discussion of the perspectival character of reality, see above, pp. 28-31.

The Act and Experience

The meaning of the phrase that the act is the unit of existence may also be seen through a consideration of the role of "experience" in Mead's thought. The unitive character of reality as a process of evolution is an implication of the notion of evolution.[2] This restricts the realm of meaningful discourse about reality to those events which are experienced or experiencable by finite human beings. Whatever transcends experience transcends reality as well. Mead writes: "The ultimate touchstone of reality is a piece of experience found in an unanalyzed world."[3] By an "unanalyzed world" Mead is referring to the fact that the relation of living form and environing world is a phenomenon that admits no further reduction. A living form and its environment, however great or small, are co-emergent objects. Reality is created in and by this relationship, and there are no further (i.e., transcendental) criteria by which reality can be measured. The analysis of the experience of a world leads only to further experience of that

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[1] I would emphasize once more that Mead's placement of the environing world within the structure of the act is of an entirely different character from the Idealistic and neo-Kantian attempts to validate nature on the basis of history. Mead never questions the existence of a physical world apart from the activities of men and other living organisms. His point is that this world has no meaning apart from its position in various acts.

[2] See above, pp. 66-76.

[3] PA, p. 32.

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world.

> Thus we can never retreat behind immediate experience to analyzed elements that constitute the ultimate reality of all immediate experience, for whatever breath of reality these elements possess has been breathed into them by some unanalyzed experience.[1]

Experience is for Mead the only gateway to reality.

What, then, is the character of a piece of experience which serves as the touchstone of reality? To put the matter simply, this piece of experience is that which arises in an act. It is "that portion of the life process of any form which includes the actions of the form as a whole with reference to an environment."[2] The qualifying phrase in this definition is intended to exclude from the category of experience such "partial" acts as breathing, circulating the blood, digesting food, etc. Experiencing involves the organism as a whole being oriented toward some end.

> Thus "experience" implies that one is giving a life-history of the form in question, that the statement of the environment would be in terms of objects such as would exist for the form in question, and that the statement of distances and characters of things in the environment would be in terms of the particular sensitivities and reactions of that form rather than any other. . . . What is implied in experience is that *things and events are stated in terms of their values for the individual as revealed in his conduct*.[3] (Italics mine.)

The common assumption that experience refers to awareness or consciousness of something is denied. Such awareness may accompany experience--and often does where man is concerned--but the basic reference of experience is to conduct and to conduct alone.[4] That a piece of experience is the touchstone of reality means, therefore, that every reality is a selective structure which is literally created in the occurrence of an act. We may now proceed to Mead's hypotheses concerning how much creation takes place.

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[1] *PA*, p. 32.

[2] *PA*, p. 405.

[3] *PA*, pp. 405-406.

[4] *SW*, p. 275; *PA*, pp. 406, 656-657.

The complexity of an act and the quality of the experience that arises in it are dependent in large measure upon the form whose act it is and which has the resulting experience. Mead points out a kind of primitive experience in which no permanent world arises.

> The original biological act is one that goes through to its consummation and has within it, at least in lower animal forms, no perceptual world of physical things. It is a world of stimuli and responses. . . .[1]

This does not mean that lower animal forms have no environment. They do select the stimuli to which they respond, and thus they do stratify for themselves a world. But this world is not grasped by the organism. Its act is completed without interruption. The experience of the animal is one of sheer immediacy or passage, in which its world simply comes into being and passes away again.

> . . . in the experience of the lower form there will be nothing but the recurrence of stimuli and responses, without comparison or reference, though in the conduct of the form there is selection and organization. Everything will happen and disappear.
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> . . . .
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> In the experience, which I have suggested, of animals without minds and physical objects, there would be no things, no permanance, no sameness.[3]

Mead suggests that this experience of a pure and simple event does involve a content which, for a more highly developed form of life such as a man, could be grasped as an existent object.[4] But the primitive form is not able so to grasp it. The duration of the percipient event or individual form throughout the experience of its act does not provide a sufficient platform on the basis of which the form may hold onto its experience and have a world.[1] The unbroken act leads only to a passing reality without discernable objects.

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[1] PA, p. 147.

[2] PA, p. 329.

[3] PA, p. 331.

[4] PA, p. 332.

Before proceeding to Mead's description of the "broken" act in which objects do arise, it is perhaps appropriate to linger a moment over the notion of immediate and unbroken experience. It may well be protested that Mead's comments concerning this level of experience represent nothing but a flight of fancy, for there is of course no known way to get inside the experience of a primitive life form. The legitimacy of such a protest must in my opinion be recognized, but it would be extremely shortsighted to reject Mead's philosophy of the act on this basis. The past, after all, contains the conditions of the present-- what "must have been" if things are as we currently perceive them to be. Mead's speculations concerning immediate experience represent his attempt to reconstruct the evolutionary stages intervening between the emergence of life and the complex characteristics of human existence as we now experience it. This he does from a particular point of view. One should rather examine it closely to see if it fits with the rest of what Mead has to say and with one's own experience.

As a matter of fact, there are analogates in contemporary common experience to the kind of immediate and world-less experience

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[1] PA, p. 334.

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about which Mead speaks. Many of these center around what is known as "preoccupation." In the act of driving, a preoccupied driver will find he has turned off a freeway without ever having noted the exit as an object in his world at the time. To take another example, most of what is said to and what occurs around a tired commuter preoccupied with his evening paper passes through his experience without being grasped as a part of his world. He must have it all related to him again at another time. Or consider a pedestrian who is intently thinking something through while simultaneously walking down a city sidewalk. Upon retrospect it would be clear to this pedestrian that in order to have traversed the course he just did he would have had to navigate his way through a number of obstacles such as parking meters, people, sidewalk elevators, potted plants, and the like. Yet none of these objects was actually grasped as a part of his world as he did his walking. They were simply stimuli to which he gave an immediate and passing response. These examples are not exactly parallel to what Mead suggests is the case regarding experience in primitive activity, but they do suggest that the phenomenon of world-less experience may well be possible.

Returning now to our theme, it is Mead's position that a permanent world emerges in the experience of an organism when the immediacy of an act of that organism is interrupted by phases which intervene between the impulse-stimulus and its consummation.[1] The primitive act contains no such intervening phases. It proceeds directly from the selected stimulus to the consummatory response. The possibility of breaking up this relationship of immediacy lies in physical contact with the distant stimulus. Contact with a stimulus intervenes between the impulse of the organism and the physiological consummation of that impulse, for consummation is something that transcends simple contact with an object.[1] Thus contact opens up what may be termed the realm of mediation within the act, that is, the increase in the complexity of the act which occurs when means are undertaken to secure the consummation that is sought. All physical objects, together with the establishment of persistent "heres" or presents within which they may be grasped, belong to the mediatory realm introduced into the act by contact.[2]

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[1] PA, pp. 147, 335.

Mead calls the basic characteristic of contact "resistance." Resistance is the "inside" of things, that aspect of an object which can never be discerned from the distance experience of its surfaces.[3] Borrowing from Whitehead, Mead calls resistance the "pushiness" of things.[4] The peculiar characteristic of resistance is that its content is identical both for the organism and for the emerging object.[5] There is a mutuality involved, such as the mutuality of the pressure of one hand upon the other. The resistance is the same for both hands, and Mead suggests it is also the same for, say, a hand and a stone. Each resists the pressure of the other equally.

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[1] PA, p. 142.

[2] PA, pp. 141, 143, 186, 327, 427.

[3] PA, pp. 143, 327; PP, pp. 134, 137.

[4] PA, p. 186.

[5] PA, p. 186; PP, pp. 134, 137.

Thus it is that Mead is able to say that "Resistance is action."[1] The action of the organism calls out an equal action or reaction in the object, and this reaction of the object reflects its "inside" every bit as much as the impulse of the organism reflects its "inside."[2] In this situation of action-reaction or mutual action, each actor may be said to pass over into the other. This is a kind of mutual identification or becoming in that, the contents of the resistance being the same, the organism may be said to occupy the standpoint of the object and vice versa.[3] This mutual contact or mutual becoming is the condition of the organism's becoming an object to itself; or in other terms, it represents the beginning of self-awareness.[4] It is an instance of the fundamental mechanism operative in the emergence of the minded self.

But we are presently concerned only with the manner in which the resistance resulting from contact opens up the realm of mediation in the act--the realm in which objects and a world emerge. Mead theorizes that the immediacy of the act was broken up in human experience by the human hand.

> The break was made by the human hand, which in its manipulation stops short of the physiological completion of the act and finds a temporary completion of the act in contact experiences of

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[1] PA, p. 144.

[2] PA, pp. 149-150; 328.

[3] PA, pp. 427-428; PP, pp. 122-124.

[4] PA, pp. 150, 163, 186, 428.

> passive and active touch, in contact. Out of this arose the physical thing in its abstraction from the final stages of the act. . . .[1]

The manipulation of a food stimulus, for example, may lead to the recognition of that stimulus as an object of the world which can be utilized as a means to the completion of the act of satisfying hunger. It is very difficult to theorize just exactly how this interruption of the act may have taken place historically. The point is, however, that in the course of human activity such interruption of the act does occur, and out of it emerge meaningful objects which man utilizes to secure the ends toward which he finds himself to be oriented.

Any sort of physical contact might in theory lead to the emergence of a physical object in the course of an act, but Mead emphasizes the human hand. The hand, with its opposable thumb, is fashioned for the manipulation of objects; but more importantly, the human hand responds to the activity of the eye in a way that no animal appendage does.[2] Mead seriously doubts that the bill and feet of a chick, for example, can answer to the perception of a physical thing in the way that the hand can.[3] He extends this doubt to cats, dogs, and monkeys as well. His general position is that the paws and mouths of animals are fashioned for the immediate activities of locomotion, tearing, and clawing rather than for feeling things.[4] However, the important point is not what he denies concerning animals

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[1] PA, p. 326. [2] SW, p. 78.

[3] SW, p. 80. See also PA, p. 143. [4] SW, pp. 79-80.

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and their experience, but what he affirms concerning human beings and the emergence in their experience of physical objects. These objects emerge as mediatory elements in an act that has been interrupted by the manipulation of these objects by the hand. The sense of touch is both the means of admission to a physical world, and the criterion of a world's reality once it has emerged.[1] This brings up the subject of sense perception in general.

The Act and the Perceptual World

In Mead's view, sense perception is an emergent function of more primitive activity.

> Sense perception is an outgrowth of the behavior by which organisms relate themselves to what is spatio-temporally away from them. This relation is a form of conduct that leads the organism toward or farther away from the object according as the act predicts contact or the lack of contact.[2]

The stimulus which the organism selects is at a distance from it. The response of the organism is toward or away from the stimulus. The act is culminated when the organism enjoys the contact or avoidance of contact predicted by his act. The organism is said to have a percept of the stimulus when its act is interrupted by the emergence of that stimulus as a physical object which mediates successful completion of the act. Functionally, this percept is the object.

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[1] Manipulation is not the whole story regarding the emergence of a physical world that is "grasped" by evolving human beings. There is a neurological side of the picture which has to do with the complexity of the central nervous system, the phenomenon of memory, etc. Mead was not really an innovative thinker in this area, and I have chosen to omit a close treatment of his scattered comments concerning it. Let it simply be noted that he accepted the view that the human nervous system facilitates a kind of experiencing which is not available to lower animals. Mead's contributions lie in his analysis of the behavioral context of this experience.

[2] PA, p. 141.

The possibility of the emergence of a percept within the act lies in the aforementioned phenomenon of contact. "Contact in the positive or negative sense is the outcome of the act that lies at the beginning of sense perception."[1] That is, the immediacy of the primitive act is interrupted by physical contact with the stimulus-object. A handling takes place. This handling usually occurs while the stimulus object is also at a distance, i.e., while it is also being seen. The confirmation of distance experience by handling is the experience which lies at the base of sense perception. "Sense perception thus interpreted belongs to organisms that have hands and handle things in completing their acts."[2]

Thus the organism's "manipulatory area" is always presupposed by sense perception. "The substantial reality of our perceptual world lies in this area of manipulation and its extensions, and the other characters of things inhere in this substantial reality."[3] This is the case in a double sense. It is true in one sense because, as Mead puts it, "The percept is there as a promise."[4] The reality of this promise is confirmed by ensuing contact experience. The percept, in so far as it is a matter of distance experience, may be illusory. "Seeing is believing, but it is believing and it never passes out of the range of probability until it is supplanted by the Thomasian touch."[1] The percept is validated only when it is fulfilled in the pushiness of the thing perceived. But in another sense--which may be termed the "genetic" sense--merely having a percept depends upon prior contact experience with something like the object. The percept as a promise carries with it the postulation of a contact experience, and if this contact is posited, it must be so posited on the basis of the experience of just that kind of contact.[2] This experience provides the organism with some imagery of the result of its perception. Without such imagery, born out of prior manipulation, there could be no perception--an utterly novel object, without any relation to the organism's past experience, would be unperceivable.[3] So the manipulatory area is fundamental to perception in two ways. It represents the past conditions for the anticipation of contact with the perceived object, and it represents the future confirmation of such anticipated contact.

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[1] PA, p. 141. [2] PA, p. 141. [3] PA, p. 141.

[4] PA, p. 103. See also pp. 122, 598.

It ought to be noted, parenthetically, that despite the tremendous significance Mead invests in the manipulatory area, he is not suggesting that one must in each case have had the empirical experience of handling an object prior to and subsequent to perceiving it.

> While in a perceptual world the ultimate test is the handling of what we see, we stop far short of this in most tests of the reality of things. We depend upon the substantive meanings of what we see, that is, upon the universalized social responses, which implicate experimental data but do not demand them.[4] (Italics mine.)

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[1] PA, p. 134. [2] PA, p. 174. [3] PA, p. 134. [4] PA, p. 151.

This will be amplified in chapter two.

Sense perception, in Mead's view, is clearly not to be identified either with distance experience or with contact experience in a simple way. It is an outgrowth, as has been noted, of activity oriented toward that which is away from the organism, and yet its reality in this type of experience is only that of a promise. In fact, in the ultimate sense its reality lies in the experience of contact for its functional reality.

> It is, however, the nature of our percepts that they can exist with the values of the manipulatory sphere, that is, that we can see them with the dimensions they would have *if* they were brought within the field in which we could both handle and see them.[1] (Italics mine.)

Thus sense perception is really a "compound" of distance and contact experience.[2] That which is distant has the value it would have if it were present in the manipulatory sphere. Mead calls this compounding of two different ways of relating to the environment the "collapsing" of the act.[3]

This is interesting in two ways. In the first place it makes clear what has thus far remained ambiguous--the fact that Mead regards that which breaks up the act by establishing a mediatory or perceptual realm as an act itself.

> A perception has in it, therefore, all the elements of an act--the stimulation, the response represented by the attitude [impulse], and the ultimate experience which follows upon the reaction, represented by the imagery arising out of past reactions. . . . The process of sensing is itself an activity.[4]

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[1] *PA*, pp. 170-171.

[2] *PA*, pp. 151, 300.

[3] *PA*, p. 128.

[4] *PA*, p. 3.

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Perceiving is thus an act within an act. The controlling impulse would seem to be the same, but the less complex act of perceiving finds its consummation in mediation of the progress of the more complex act toward its ultimate consummation. Mead does not have much to say regarding the complexification of the act in this manner, but it would appear that what is commonly accepted as routine daily behavior in the modern world is actually an incredibly complex structure of interrelated acts and acts within acts. It would be well to bear in mind that most of his examples are rather oversimplified in the interest of illustration.

The second interesting aspect of the compounding of distance and contact experience in the act of perceiving is the phenomenon of the "collapsing" of the act itself. Mead defines perception in terms of it:

> A percept is a collapsed act in which the result of the act to which the stimulus incites is represented by imagery of the experience of past acts of a like nature.[1]

The future result of the act is made present by anticipation on the basis of past experience. This gives the percept a present value which it has in fact not yet attained, and which it may indeed never attain.[2]

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[1] SW, p. 134.

[2] The reality of the promise held forth by the percept still resides in actual contact, even though in the collapsing of the act the percept carries contact value. Perceptionsmay be in error--they may promise what they cannot deliver. In such cases the error will be revealed through actual contact at the end of the perceptual act, or through socially constructed meanings which are derived from such actual contact. For Mead's views on perceptual error, see PA, pp. 103, 154-158, 172, 627.

Time is in effect nullified so that there can be created that relationship which is commonly assumed to be "there" between the organism and the objects in its environment, namely, the relationship of simultaneous existence.[1] In Mead's view this relationship is an achievement, not a given. The results of an act not yet completed must be wrested from the future and brought into the present if there is to be a permanent environment.

It is Mead's conjecture that the key to intelligent behavior lies in the ability of the organism to collapse the perceptual act, or to estimate in advance the sort of contact experience which the distance experience promises.[2] Unreflective perceptual perspectives contain real objects only in the future; while in reflective perceptual perspectives the reality of objects is hypothetically tested in the present.[3] This testing occurs by means of the organism, in the role of the object, initiating a motor response against its own effort of resistance.[4] In this way the distance perception and the memory images from past experience, both of which are "away" from the organism, are merged with the organism's present contact experience in its immediate surroundings. The (handless) lower organism lacks the means to become simultaneous with its perceptions, and thus the perceptual world of such an organism always lies in the future.[5] The organism cannot collapse the course of its perceptual acts, and therefore cannot hypothetically test the consequences of its acts in advance of their completion. Lacking this ability, the lower organism cannot from Mead's point of view be said to be intelligent. Mead was unable to draw a hard and fast line between the perception of mediatory things and the so-called reasoning process.[1] Both involve a process of conscious mediation.

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[1] PA, pp. 171-172. [2] SW, p. 78. [3] PA, pp. 188-189.

[4] PA, p. 189. See also pp. 194-195. [5] PA, pp. 143, 149.

Mead does, however, attribute the experience of sense perception to some animals. The critical difference between animal perception and human perception is that what is perceived by animals passes away with its immediate function in the act, while human perception yields an environmental perspective which is characterized by certain identities that endure.[2] We have seen how the collapsing of the act is responsible for the initial appearance of the perceptual object. The endurance of this object is due to the phenomenon of inhibition. Inhibition of the act occurs when two or more alternative completions of the act in progress are present in the organism.[3] This creates a situation in which the aforementioned "testing" of the alternatives may take place. This situation becomes the permanent environment in which the emerging response (one of the alternatives in question) will occur.

> An individual . . . whose conduct involves the selection and organization of alternative responses from a given situation must hold onto this common situation in the selection and organization of the responses in the act. . . . the appearance of such an individual (an individual in whose conduct there are acts with alternative responses within a framework of the act which remains the same) is responsible for the appearance of an identical element in experience.[4] (Italics mine.)

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[1] SW, pp. 80-81. [2] PA, p. 337.

[3] PA, pp. 149, 161, 343. [4] PA, pp. 338-339.

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Each of the competing alternatives--irrespective of which one or which combination is ultimately selected--involves and depends upon certain characteristics of the situation which are found to be the same for the others. The act of the organism is going on. The goal is set, but the means to the goal are not yet selected. The permanent environment is created out of what belongs in common to these unselected means. If the organism is unable to hold onto this common situation, it will also be unable to entertain its alternative possibilities. The two are co-emergent in the experience of the organism.

Mead is not totally clear as to _how_ the permanent environment is constructed in this organizing phase of an inhibited act, but he does offer analyses which go at least part way toward answering this question. The stoppage of the act by the emergence of alternative completions of it is, he says, "favorable" to a process of abstracting from the projected passage of events those objects and structures of objects which will remain identical no matter which alternative passage of events actually takes place.[1] The permanent environment is, in other words, the abstraction from the future of that which is "irrelevant to passage." This irrelevance to passage reflects the manner in which an identical environmental pattern is repeated in each of the alternatives, but it also reflects the position of these alternatives within the act. That is, the environmental pattern created in each projected completion of the act belongs to the _same phase_ of the act seeking completion.[2] The passage or time span that would elapse if these alternatives were to be enacted is in a certain

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[1] _PA_, p. 149.

[2] _PA_, p. 148.

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sense annulled. Each alternative passes in reflection, but not in actuality.[1] This creates a kind of "timeless space" in which the lasting character of the act or process going on is transformed to the intervening field at rest, from which one of the alternatives will be chosen to complete the act.[2] This lasting field, Mead explains, may be understood as the hypothetical extension of the organism's manipulatory area so as to embrace all of the distance characters of all objects relevant to each of the alternatives in question.[3] The organism responds to these distant objects with what Mead calls "terminal attitudes," his terminology for a response in terms of present manipulation even though the stimulus is distant.[4] It calls out in itself the same contents of resistance which the objects would direct toward it if the distance between them were annulled by actual contact.[5] This phenomenon has been discussed as the collapsing of an act. In this hypothetically extended manipulatory area emerge the repetitive patterns which, as they belong to the same phase of the act, constitute the "stuff" of experience, the permanent environment.[6] A kind of cross-referencing occurs, in which "What is not done [the excluded alternatives] acts in continual definition of what is done [the selected alternative]."[7] The result of this organizing phase of the act is the experience of a permanent environment.

This permanent environment "lasts" throughout the remainder

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[1] PA, p. 178.
[2] PA, p. 346.
[3] PA, pp. 161, 174, 178.
[4] PA, pp. 149, 161.
[5] PA, p. 148.
[6] PA, p. 148.
[7] PP, p. 128.

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of the act, not merely because mutually inhibiting alternatives have created a field in which it could come into being, but because its lasting character is the condition for the completion of the act.[1] This is a rather crucial point, and serves to illustrate the fundamental character of the notion of activity in Mead's thought. In the final analysis, a permanent world emerges in experience primarily because the organism has a persistent attitude toward the stimulus that is the goal of its act, not because it has a set of sense perceptions with such and such a content.[2] The organism is basically trying to do something. Its sense perceptions--including the critical factor as to whether these perceptions are merged or abstracted into a permanent world that is grasped by the organism--are always a function of its persistence in seeking its goal. If the organism is of a type that is able to make the end of a durational experience present at the beginning of that experience and throughout its duration, there is the foundation within the goal-oriented activity of that organism for the experience of a world of permanent objects.[3] In such cases sense perceptions are not the atomistic building blocks of the experience of the world, but themselves belong to the larger context of an act that is going on and within which they emerge as means to the end being sought.

Permanence and the Present

But the grounding of world-experience in the structure of the act is a general principle applicable to all types of experience. The

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[1] PA, p. 143. [2] PA, p. 335. [3] PA, p. 440.

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experience of a permanent or non-passing world is, on the other hand, an experience of a very particular type. This has already been touched upon, but perhaps a summary statement is now in order.

The experience of a world that does not pass away with each succeeding phase of the act belongs to those forms of life which are able to establish a "now" or a "present." This present is to be sharply distinguished from the passing "specious present," which is normally interpreted as the knife-edge juncture between the past and the future.[1] The true character of the present is, on the contrary, that of duration--duration which is experienced by the individual as he transcends his position in time by assuming roles out of the past and the future.[2] This durational present is indeed "specious," but only in the sense that it is a duration of reflection and not of the actual completion of the act within which the objects of the present arise.[3] In this present of reflection, the individual wrests the events of the past and future out of their status of being "then" (distant, away), so that they may "now" function in the determination of what is emerging in the present.[4] That is, what is spatially and temporally at a distance from the individual is brought into a relationship of "cogredience" with him, where "cogredience" is understood as a persistent relation between the "here-present" and the "there-present" in which the temporal dimension is annulled.[5]

It must be reiterated that this relationship of cogredience is an *achievement* in a world characterized by relativity, not a given. Specifically, it is the achievement of the *human individual*, in whom is found the basic elements necessary to the establishment of a lasting present. These elements are: (1) the inhibition of the act; (2) the contact experience of the realm of things which can mediate the consummation of the act, (3) the calling out in the individual himself of the resistance which distant objects would exert if they were at the door of contact.[1] This cogredient relationship is not automatically a characteristic of human experience, but must be reflectively established. Mead points out that a man who has just fallen off a cliff does not experience a present, but only a passing series of objects at a distance from him as he falls. What is occurring simply does not lend itself to reflection, in such a case.

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[1] __PA__, pp. 220-222. [2] __PA__, pp. 198-200.

[3] __PA__, p. 220. [4] __PA__, p. 339. [5] __PA__, p. 342.

But in most cases the human individual is able to establish for himself a stable present in which he experiences the permanent world which represents both the reality in which he is, and the means by which he will alter reality through his emergent responses. This stable present and the reality or perspective it represents is not, however, eternal. Its duration is limited. The functional boundaries of the present, and thus of perspectival reality, are those of the act that is going on.[2] With the consummation of the act a new reality emerges, and so on for each of the series of individual and social acts in which the individual is implicated. "Human experience thus takes place in pulses," Mead writes, and each pulsation represents a

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[1] *PA*, p. 148. See also p. 161.

[2] *PP*, p. 88.

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present reality that has come into being and passed away again in favor of the reality arising in the present of the ensuing act.[1] These pulsations of reality are organized in further acts of reflection, and the result is the world known to science and the common man alike--the world of persistent continuities and emergent change. But all such organization takes place in someone's present, and it is this basic fact to which Mead makes reference when he asserts so unequivocally that "reality exists in a present."[2] As a present may be established only within the context of an act in progress, this serves to illustrate the fundamental character of the notion of activity for Mead's thought.

It must be emphasized, in addition, that the present which is the locus of perspectival reality has a broad social dimension.[3] Whatever objects make their appearance in the present of one individual may appear in the presents of other individuals as well.

> The thing which an individual perceives is or may be perceived by others who are fortunately located spatiotemporally and similarly endowed. The individual perceives the thing which the others perceive. Both the thing and the perception have this generalized character.[4]

This being the case, there arises in human communities a common world-perspective which is shared in its major dimensions by all members of that community. "The social individual is already in a perspective which belongs to the community within which his self has arisen."[1] Since the human self is created out of relationships established in a community, the emerging self finds that it already shares the common world of that community. It has taken it over as a set of social meanings or responses to environmental stimuli. These meanings, representing the collective experience of the community's past, become a part also of the individual's past. As such, they are a part of the individual's perceptual world, as past conditions and future control are made present to the individual as he reflectively perceives the world and guides his activity in it. Thus it is that the attempt to understand perception from the standpoint of the individual perceiver in his isolation is basically misdirected. The individual perspective is by and large the gift of the common perspective, not vice versa.[2] It is against the background of this common perceptual world, as a matter of fact, that the perceptions peculiar to the individual may be seen in a context which permits the emergence of new reality in the completion of the individual's act. The occasion for emergence is always a conflict between features of a world whose universality in other aspects is unquestioned; and the emergent itself is always a new universal.[3]

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[1] PA, p. 178.

[2] PP, p. 1. See above, pp. 102-111for a discussion of the present primarily in terms of the notion of emergence.

[3] For a discussion of the social dimensions of perspectives, see above, pp.

[4] PA, p. 140.

Activity and Selected Philosophical Problems

Mead's conviction that the basic relation of an organism to its environment is one of activity represents a significant departure from

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[1] PA, p. 152.

[2] PA, p. 140.

[3] PA, pp. 140, 370-371.

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that tradition of Western philosophy, perhaps epitomized in Descartes and Kant, for which knowledge of a world transcending the self has become a central problem.[1] Traditional epistemological concern has assumed, operationally, that the basic organism-environment relation is one of cognition. The character of the external world--even its very existence--is a matter of doubt. It stands over against the self in mystery. This makes the fundamental problem of the self one of reality determination. Only when the gap is bridged, as it were, may the self move on to questions regarding its activities in the world whose reality has thus been established.

Mead emphatically denies that man is such a creature that may passively contemplate the world he is in before becoming actively related to it. Man is rather the creature who, _ab initio_, is doing things in and with this world. Activity in the world is not a relationship that may be entered into at will. Man is always already engaged in his world, always on his way toward some goal. This active, in-process relationship is the basic context within which cognition arises and choices are made. It is the presupposition of the mind and

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[1] In one sense Mead's work does represent a "solution" to the epistemological problem--the assertion that it does not exist as traditionally stated--and to this extent one could maintain that Mead is still captive to the tradition he rejects. But a similar observation can be made with respect to any innovative thinker who attempts to deal seriously with the history of thought preceding his own. For this reason it seems better to this writer to emphasize Mead's departure from epistemological tradition. One encounters quite a different philosophical outlook when the external physical world is regarded as the presupposition of the individual self and his experience rather than a discontinuous realm with which the transcendental self must seek relationships.

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the self, and as such it does not itself fall under suspicion or doubt. It is not a mental relationship, but the fundamental relationship which enables mentality to come into being.

> The relationship of the individual to his environment, in so far as the individual determines the environment and is determined by the environment, is certainly not a cognitive relationship. It is selective, constitutive, causal.[1]

This is to assert that neither the physical, extended world nor the cognitive, unextended self have an existence in and of themselves. In the relationship of activity, man and his environment are co-determinative of each other. The selective activity exercised by man (and all living forms) is met by the reciprocal activity of the environment which Mead terms "resistance," and in this encounter each is what it is determined by the other to be.[2] This mutuality of determination has a temporal or processive dimension. In the course of ongoing activity both self and world acquire emergent qualities which are in the deepest sense of the term novel. Self and world evolve in concert, and from this point of view the epistemological bifurcation of reality into "inner" and "outer" makes no sense whatsoever.[3] Mead does not deny that a study of sense perception does involve a kind of correlating relationship (for instance, the correlation of a retinal image and a visual object), but he asserts that this relationship is "utterly misleading."[4] By this he means that it ignores its context, which is the constitutive relationship of activity.

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[1] PA, p. 337.

[2] PA, p. 144. See above, p.124.

[3] MT, p. 308.

[4] PA, p. 337.

Mead does allow that there is a problem of knowledge, but it occurs at an entirely different level. The problem of knowledge, rightly understood, manifests itself whenever an ongoing act is brought to a halt by the appearance within it of alternative means of bringing it to its completion. From this point of view, knowing is a process of adjustment called forth by the advent of the problematic in conduct.[1] When knowing is successfully consummated in knowledge, it becomes the means of freeing conduct for its completion, which is to say that knowledge is the means of emergence and evolutionary advance.[2]

But there are limits to the scope of the problematic in conduct. That which becomes a problem and thus temporarily inhibits the act can be perceived as a problem only against the background of a world-perspective which is common or universal in its major dimensions.[3] It is only a certain aspect of this common world that emerges as a problem in the act of some individual. When this occurs, the epistemological problem is to reorganize the field of conduct in thought so that the problem disappears and conduct proceeds.[4] There is no question mark placed by the entire physical world. The question mark is placed only by that portion of the world which a quantum of experience has called into question. The rest is accepted without question as there.[1] The reorganized world which emerges as knowledge also passes into the realm of the commonly accepted. This whole process belongs to "nature," and its context is the act. There can be no question, then, of a fundamental problem of bringing unextended mind and the extended physical world into relationship. In Mead's view they were never out of relationship. Knowledge is a natural emergent in the course of natural processes, and it is entirely unwarranted to lift it out of this context and transform it into the central problem for philosophical reflection.[2]

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[1] MT, p. 350. [2] PA, pp. 50-56, 95, 539.

[3] PA, pp. 27-44. See also above, pp. 139-140.

[4] PP, p. 68.

Turning now to a slightly different question, we may redirect attention to the relationship of activity to Mead's other fundamental reality notions. It has been suggested that the notion of activity is descriptive of the matrix within which a relative and emerging universe achieves definitive form and is experienced as an orderly unit.[3] Although the bulk of this section has dealt with Mead's understanding of how this is the case, it will perhaps be instructive to place the issue in a somewhat different perspective. It is with regard to the question of the organization of perspectival reality that Mead takes great care to differentiate his own position from that of Alfred North Whitehead. Mead feels that his account of the organization of perspectives is "at least the most obscure phase of "Whitehead's philosophy."[1] An analysis of the reasoning underlying this judgment should reveal the fundamental thrust of Mead's own position.[2]

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[1] Mead illustrates this at some length by describing the methodology of the physical sciences (PA, pp. 27-44). He emphasizes that "epistemology, the problem of knowledge, has excited not the slightest interest among scientists, whose profession is that of discovering what has been unknown." (PA, p. 27.)

[2] PA, pp. 628-629.

[3] See above, pp. 113-114.

According to Mead, Whitehead handles the problem of the organization of perspectives in nature with the notion of "prehension." Mead describes this notion as a form of perception which does not involve consciousness, but which does involve the relationship between an object and the world.[3]

> The object prehends the rest of the world. Prehension takes in the entire universe in so far as a mass-particle expressed in terms of energy is related to or prehends every other object in its world.[4]

Thus the notion of prehension, in Mead's understanding, is descriptive of the fundamental relationships between and among all objects. Individual perspectives are formed out of objects prehended in a certain fashion by a given percipient event. Whatever combinations of perspectives emerge in the world do so because they are prehended in that

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[1] SW, p. 315.

[2] The material which follows does not constitute an analytic comparison of Mead and Whitehead with respect to the question of how perspectives are organized. The focus of attention is not upon comparison, but upon Mead's understanding of Whitehead and upon the manner in which Mead feels the notion of activity adequately covers certain deficiencies which he finds in Whitehead's notion of prehension. The reader is once again reminded that Mead's discussion of Whitehead does not include Process and Reality.

[3] PA, p. 639. [4] PA, p. 639.

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combination from a particular standpoint.

But, as suggested earlier, Mead finds the notion of prehension thus stated to be more confusing than enlightening as a description of how reality is organized into the forms in which it is commonly experienced. Whitehead's universe, in Mead's eyes, is a rather disjointed affair, consisting ultimately of separate and discrete units of existence which are there in nature but unorganized in terms of any temporal scheme.[1] When prehension takes place, there is the perception of an ordered relationship of these discrete units. This ordered relationship or perspective is there in nature to be perceived, but is so perceived only from a particular viewpoint. What Mead finds confusing, I believe, is how being perceived from a particular viewpoint overcomes the basic discontinuity of these discrete existential units. The notion of prehension actually states only _that_ there is order among these units and _that_ it is apparent in its definite form only from a definite standpoint. But Mead is interested also in the question of _how_ this is the case, and in the interest of pursuing that question he proposes an alternative account of the organization of perspectives.

The basic problem lies in the independence of Whitehead's units of existence.

> I wish to contrast again the universe where its continuity breaks down in what Whitehead terms "atomicity" (composed of units characterized by inertia, electrical charge, by energy, together with their fields, spatiotemporally extended but with an

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[1] _PA_, pp. 350-356.

> indeterminate time dimension) with the universe, or slabs of nature, that arise with the life-process in its successive stages of development.[1]

In Mead's view, as contrasted to Whitehead's, the unit of existence is also an event, but it is an event which is the act of a living form. It involves both the living form and the environment that it selects. The form does not prehend a pre-existant pattern, but the form creates the pattern in its act of prehension or selection. The pattern emerges in the intermediary stages of the act, as has previously been discussed. These patterns are organized into common worlds by those forms of life which are able to hold onto a world by the establishment of a present. In a present the individual form takes the role of the other (other objects, meanings, perspectives, institutions, etc.), and in this manner the other may be said to be inside the individual. With the description of the process by which the other makes its appearance within the percipient event itself, Mead feels the problem of discontinuity among the units of existence is overcome. Activity provides the continuing matrix within which the many--all the others--may be organized into a single unified perspective.

Intrinsic to this view is the assertion that there are perspectives which emerge in nature in concert with the selectivity and organizing power of living forms, which, after a time, may lose their objectivity or common reality and pass away.[2] As Mead interprets Whitehead, the Great Pyramid is an object in nature, and as such it does not pass away; but Mead does not feel that this interpretation is the only one that can be advanced for the experience of the pyramid.[1] For Mead the experience of the pyramid as an object in the world is inseparably tied to the selectivity and organizing power of the organism(s) experiencing it. This means that under certain conditions the pyramid may indeed pass.

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[1] _PA_, p. 350.

[2] _SW_, p. 315 and _PP_, p. 171.

> I am maintaining the pragmatic doctrine that the sensuous characters emerge with the sentience of the form and that cognition represents a later phase of behavior and that it is due to this phase of behavior that the lasting characters enter.[2]

If cognition were to pass from the earth, the Great Pyramid would from this point of view pass with it; for only those life forms which can bring forward their past and anticipate the future toward which they are moving, and grasp them in the present, can experience the lasting character of the pyramid. "At least," he writes, "I am attempting to show that this is a possible interpretation of nature as a passage of events, even in its spatial dimensions."[3] And if it seems to go against much of common experience to suggest the passing of a pyramid, Mead also points out that men do experience that which passes, and concludes that the alternative view really does not account for the organization of perspectives at all.

> And it is not simply out of consistency with pragmatic doctrine that I am presenting this possibility, for it appears to me not only that the immediate findings of experience are that colors and objects do pass but also that scientific analysis, in retreating, as it is forced to retreat, to ultimate physical particles as its objects, *loses also its time systems and the consentient sets and their organization together with the objects that arise in them*.[4] (Italics mine.)

It belongs to the living form to wrench the elements of the world that is amorphously "there" out of their awayness, and to structure it into the objects and sets of objects that belong to experience.

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[1] *PA*, p. 356. [2] *PA*, p. 356. [3] *PA*, p. 356. [4] *PA*, p. 356.

The passing away of perspectives is the reverse side of the phenomenon of emergence. When conduct is inhibited by conflicting alternatives out of the future-made-present, this signifies the passing of a perspective in favor of that new perspective which will emerge after reality is reorganized in the mind so that conduct may proceed to its consummation. True prehension is, from this point of view, the process of conduct in the intermediary phases of the acts of cognitive beings.

> What I am suggesting is that this process, in which a perspective ceases to be objective, becomes if you like subjective, and in which new common minds and new common perspectives arise, is *an instance of the organization of perspectives in nature*, of the creative advance of nature. . . . (Italics mine.)
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> I submit that the only instance we have of prehension in experience is this holding together of future and past as possibilities--for all pasts are as essentially subject to revision as the futures, and are, therefore, only possibilities--and the common content which endures is that which is common to the organism and the environment in the perspective. This in the organism is identified with the spatiotemporally distant stimuli as a possibly real present, past, and future. *The unity lies in the act or process, the prehension is the exercise of this unity*, when the process has been checked through conflicting tendencies, and the conditions and results of these tendencies are held as possibilities in a specious present. (Italics mine.)
>
> Thus the social and psychological process is but an instance of what takes place in nature, if nature is an evolution, i.e., if it proceeds by reconstruction in the presence of conflicts, and if, therefore, possibilities of different reconstructions are present, reconstructing its pasts as well as its futures.[1]

Or in other terms, the unity and organization of the world of common experience is a function of the social activity of the human community, and the only kind of prehension that makes any kind of experiential sense is that represented by the process of cognitive reconstruction in which an old world is superseded by an emergent world. Organization is a matter of being in a number of things at the same time, and this occurs by participation in the common group perspective in the cognitive phases of the act.[1] It is this presence of other things in the experience of the individual organism by its participation in the meanings of the common group perspective that supplies the dimension of continuity missing in Whitehead's account of the organization of perspectives.[2]

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[1] *SW*, p. 316-317 and *PP*, pp. 172-174.

It is in the light of such considerations as these that one must interpret the labels that are applied to Mead's thought. He is usually identified with the philosophical school of Pragmatism and accepts this identification himself--with good reason. In a fundamental sense the structure of the whole evolving, relativistic universe depends for Mead upon what occurs in the *pragma*, the deed or the occurrence.[3] There is neither a neo-hedonism nor an uncritical worship of success involved in this position. On the contrary, there is a thoughtful and imaginative attempt to come to some understanding of the foundations of existence in the light of the discoveries of modern science in the realms of physics, biology, and psychology.

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[1] *PA*, p. 613.

[2] *PA*, p. 613.

[3] Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, trans. and ed. by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, 4th rev. and aug. ed., 1952.

In this attempt the notion of activity has emerged as that which unites Mead's other basic notions into a consistent, unified world-view. In the most fundamental sense for Mead, "The reality awaits upon the success of the act."[1] This being the case, it is appropriate also that Mead is identified with the psychological school of Behaviorism. But once again one must point to the philosophical depth underlying this identification. One does not find in Mead a simple doctrinaire rejection of traditional psychology in favor of a newer ideological position, but rather a penetrating and exhaustive analysis of that category which looms so crucial in his philosophical world view, the category of the act. Mead's social behaviorism is the logical outgrowth of the rest of his thought.

In short, everything hangs together for Mead in the processes of living conduct. In these processes what is experienced as reality--however simple or complex that experience may be--is selected and organized. One may of course speculate concerning a reality that transcends experience or that has a definite form which experience merely approximates, but that is to take an entirely different approach that is incompatible with Mead's. The only reality he knows is that which emerges in experience in the natural course of what is going on in conduct. It is functional through and through. As the demands of what is going on in conduct change, the dimensions of reality are correspondingly expanded or contracted. If this be the case, it follows that one's speculations concerning the character of reality will be directed toward the way things operate, not toward what things are.[1] This is the direction that Mead's speculations have taken. His metaphysic consists of a description of the way reality operates; specifically, of the way in which reality is responsive to the intelligent activity of the human community. The key to the future of the real lies in the behavior of human beings and the forms of their social relatedness. The operations of man's political, economic, social, scientific, educational and religious institutions are matters of truly cosmic significance.

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[1] SW, p. 317 and PP, p. 173.

The Scope of the Notion of Activity

The foregoing analysis of Mead's solution to the problem of the organization of perspectives in nature puts us in a position to comment further upon his failure to generalize the notion of activity into the inorganic phases of existence which presumably antedate the emergence of life in the evolutionary process. Mead's reluctance to do so has already been remarked upon. The basic problem would seem to be that when one begins to speak of the world as it was prior to the emergence of life, one is speaking of a situation in which the processes responsible for the emergence of the world that is amorphously there into a perceptual world with definite configuration are non-existent.

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[1] The full weight of the emphasis upon the functional character of reality will be more keenly felt in chapter five, which consists of theological speculation from a Meadian standpoint. The theological formulations there attempted will largely be descriptions of the manner in which the reality given the name "God" is an integral factor in the operations of human existence. Such an emphasis upon a "God who acts" will perhaps not be surprising to students of the Old Testament, but it will in many respects represent a sharp contrast to other traditional forms of theological conceptualization.

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Both logic and common sense would lead one to suppose, Mead says, that the worlds which existed before the sensuous characters and functional contents of objects in the environments of living individuals--the worlds out of which these emerged--would be open to description independently of any relation to the life process emerging from them.[1] But Mead points out that the presupposition of the notion of relativity is that the selection of any consentient set is dependent upon a percipient individual.[2] He further points out that if one can speak at all about a universe of worlds existing prior to the emergence of life, it would be a universe which included neither consentient sets, physical objects beyond the physical particles described by science, nor living forms and their environments.[3] In short, the pre-organic world would appear to be lacking in any agency whereby any forms of definiteness in it might be constituted. Whitehead's solution to this problem was to postulate the existence of an indefinite number of time systems "there" in nature to be selected; but Mead rejects this solution in favor of the view that forms of definiteness both emerge and pass away again with the sentience and cognition of living forms.[4] This belief leads Mead to wonder if the whole notion of a pre-organic universe is not merely a "logical abstraction," by which he appears to mean that such a universe may be a construct of contemporary mental experience without any conceivable experiential correlate in the past.[5] If that were the case, then the attempt to generalize the notion of activity in this realm would appear to be without meaning.

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[1] __PA__, p. 354. [2] __PA__, p. 354. [3] __PA__, p. 350.

[4] __PA__, pp. 354-356. [5] __PA__, p. 350.

But it is not clear that this way of stating the issue is the only one available to the investigator. When it is recalled, for instance, that *no* past exists in isolation as a datum--that *every* past exists as a possibility of a given present--then the acknowledged inaccessibility of the forms of pre-organic worlds loses some of its force.[1] The past at any time is a hypothetical account of the conditions to which the present and the emerging (and equally hypothetical) future must conform. It is "what must have been" in order for the present to be what it is. As the present which it explains is modified, the past is modified as well. In so far as the past is always a function of the present in this manner, the problem of speaking of the unexperienced past in terms of the experienced present is at least mitigated. To be more specific, while one may acknowledge with Mead that the pre-organic universe apparently did not contain the living processes in the phases of which contemporary world-experience takes place, one may also acknowledge with Mead that science has every reason to postulate the existence in that universe of individual event-particles in a state of relative motion. This is, to be sure, a hypothetical postulate, but it shares this hypothetical status with every past. It helps the scientist explain the present. This hypothetical universe of event-particles is perhaps a *conceptual* universe, as contrasted to a *perceptual* universe, but its importance is not diminished for that fact. Such a universe, itself lying beyond experience, is always and everywhere the presupposition of the perceptual worlds of experience.[1] The recognition of this fact, it seems to me, marks a first step toward the extension of the notion of activity into the epochs preceding the evolution of life.

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[1] See above, pp. 97-102.

A second step is to recognize that one need not--and indeed must not--look for evidence of activity in this realm which corresponds point for point to the activity of living creatures. Mead distinguishes three "fields" of relativity: the physical, the animal, and the self-conscious.[2] Similarly he notes shifts in the means by which the evolutionary process is maintained, and again these correspond to the inanimate, the animate but not self-conscious, and the self-conscious.[3] The mechanism of emergence varies in a similar fashion. The point is that one is confronted here by an evolutionary history marked by at least three rather easily distinguishable stages or levels. The fundamental reality notions which Mead generalizes are characteristic of each of these levels of existence, but not in exact correlation. The relationship is analogous rather than exact. The activity of a human being, for example, is a much more complex affair than the activity of a termite, even though the analytical structure of the act in both cases may be roughly similar. It would be foolish to expect the termite to function in exactly the same manner as the man. Similarly, it would be foolish to expect inanimate objects or event-particles to exhibit the same sort of activity as the termite. What is sought is an analogate of the act, not a copy. This must be a fundamental consideration for any attempt to carry Mead's speculations beyond the point where he left them.

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[1] PA, pp. 271-273.

[2] PP, pp. 63-68.

[3] MT, pp. 166-168; PA, p. 350.

A third step toward extending Mead's thoughts beyond the limits of his own efforts is to recognize that the notion of activity at its most general level fundamentally represents a function, the function of world-organization or world-structuring. Activity is the process wherein the forms of the relativistic universe evolve or emerge. It is what is going on that enables new relations to come into being. The possibility of becoming--the chance that things may come together and hang together--depends upon activity taking place. The question is, what characteristic of the pre-organic universe performs this function in a manner analogous to the biological category of the act?

To pursue this question to a satisfactory conclusion would transcend the purpose of this study, which is not to follow up every untried implication of Mead's thought, but to develop some of its theological implications. For that purpose it is necessary only to show that the analysis of the fundamental structure of his thought here presented is not truncated in one of its aspects. Such a truncation would be apparent if the notion of activity were applicable only to phases of the evolutionary process characterized by the presence of life and the biological category of the act. But an attempt has been made in the preceding paragraphs to show that, while difficulties abound, there is nothing in the notion of activity itself which a priori precludes its application to the pre-organic universe.

This application might conceivably be made in a number of ways. It would probably be born out of one of the current theories of the physical sciences. The evidence for it would be theoretical, very probably involving an analysis of "scientific objects" which transcend perceptual experience, but which, as Mead points out, are ultimately based upon such perceptual experiences as the measurings and observations gleaned from the instruments of the laboratory.[1] One might, for example, experiment with the notion that the concept of energy, which has replaced the concept of substance in relativity physics, is evidence of the notion of activity in the pre-organic world.[2] Energy, as the primordial cause of all change, is analogous to the primordial state of activity of the biological organism. The chance intersection of energy particles in motion over a long period of time (in a loose sense of the term "time") is analogous to the selection that occurs in the course of the biological act. The resistances encountered in these chance intersections are analogous, presumably, to the resistances encountered by the organism in perceptual objects. These resistances Mead himself designated as a form of action, since they exhibit the feature of having an "inside."[3] The results of these chance encounters are presumably emergent forms of energy particles exhibiting new characteristics and themselves perpetuating their causality on still newer forms. This would appear to be analogous to the emergent in the biological act.

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[1] PP, pp. 57-64.

[2] Werner Heisenberg, Physics and Philosophy, with an Introduction by F. S. C. Northrup, World Perspectives Series, vol. XIX (Torchbook ed.; New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1958), pp. 63, 70-72.

[3] PA, p. 144.

This analysis, or a similar one utilizing a different concept, could be carried out in minute detail. In the course of the analysis it would become apparent whether or not the phenomenon in question was generic enough in scope to warrant being called the matrix of reality, which is the function of the notion of activity. To repeat, to carry the analysis to that level is beyond the scope of the present investigation. The task here is only to show that the para-experiential past is not closed to the notion of activity. This has been done, first, by laying down the criteria to which an attempt to apply the notion in this realm must conform; and second, by presenting a paradigmatic sketch of one such conceivable attempt. I conclude, then, that the notion of activity is as generic in scope as the notions of relativity, evolution, and emergence. Together these ontogenetic notions comprise the understanding of Mead's thought which governs the presentation of material in the subsequent chapters.

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CHAPTER II

THE GENERALIZED OTHER VIEWED IN THE EMERGENCE OF ITS COUNTERPART, THE HUMAN SOCIAL SELF

Overview

In light of the analysis of the preceding chapter, it is fitting that the notion of the "generalized other" be introduced by means of a description of its function in the genesis and growth of human experience. All of reality is from Mead's point of view basically functional in character, which is to say that every determinate perspective and organization of perspectives derives its identity from its utility or relevance in the conduct of some life-form. The concept of the generalized other, insofar as it is an entity coming within the purview of human experience, is no exception to this fundamental viewpoint. In Mead's treatment of the notion, it is an emergent in the course of the evolutionary development of the human social self. It belongs to those phases of the act which Mead designates as "mediatory," and is in this sense dependent for its existence upon those organisms which are able to interrupt the immediacy of their actions and to utilize means for the attainment of their ends in the manner previously discussed.[1]

However--and here the notion of relativity is reflected--it would be inaccurate in the extreme to portray the generalized other as a purely derived reality structure. While it is accurate to say that the generalized other owes its existence to the selves in whose acts it emerges, it is equally true that there can be no reality with the character of selfhood without the existence of a generalized other. The self, too, is an emergent in the process of evolution, and the generalized other is a necessary element in this emergence. Thus the self is dependent upon the generalized other as the generalized other is dependent upon the self. The truth of the matter is that in Mead's thinking neither of them is viewed as prior to the other, but they are treated as co-emergent reality structures.

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[1] See above, ch. 1, pp. 123-127.

The purpose of this chapter is to become familiar with these correlative structures by means of tracing the course of their emergence and the dynamics of their interaction. The material to be presented largely represents the content of Mead's lectures on social psychology delivered at the University of Chicago.[1] The starting point is the social conduct of living organisms. The result is an analysis of the history and conditions of human becoming.

The term "becoming" is carefully chosen here, for both the self and the generalized other are eventful in character. This is to say that they are both emergents, not merely in the genetic or historical sense, but in the sense that they continually emerge in new dimensions and configurations in the process of their interaction. They are, like all things and structures of things comprising reality

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[1] Stenographic notes of these lectures comprise the bulk of MSS. See the Preface by Charles W. Morris, pp. v-vii.

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in Mead's view, historical evolutionary routes of passage rather than eternal entities. This eventful character will become more apparent in the course of the exposition.

It should perhaps be noted that Mead passes rather freely in his lectures between material dealing with the emergence of the minded self from unminded animal existence, and material dealing with the operations of the self at the present evolutionary stage and with child development. This freedom is also reflected to a degree in the analysis to follow. It may appear that this practice might lead to some confusion, but this danger is in my opinion more apparent than actual. The basic principles are the same in both cases--chiefly the getting of the responses of others into the self by means of some kind of symbol. The increment brought about by the passage of time in the evolutionary history of man is basically an increased facility in accomplishing this task. Wherever it seems helpful indication will be given as to whether the material under discussion relates primarily to the genetic-historical or the contemporary social dynamics point of view, but in most cases it will be applicable to both. A separate treatment does not seem to be indicated.

The Social Process

It is a universal empirical fact for Mead that the fundamental situation of all living organisms, however simple or complex these organisms may be, is a social (or communal) situation.

> There is no living organism of any kind whose nature or constitution is such that it could exist or maintain itself in complete isolation from all other living organisms, or such that relations to other living organisms (whether of its own or

> other species)--relationships which in the strict sense are social--do not play a necessary and indispensable part in its life. All living organisms are bound up in a general social environment or situation, in a complex of social interrelations and interactions upon which their continued existence depends.[1]

This state of affairs is most clearly demonstrated at the level of the fundamental biophysical needs such as those dealing with nutrition and reproduction. These impulses and needs are social through and through:

> . . . since they involve or require social situations and relations for their satisfaction by any given individual organism; and they thus constitute the foundation of all types or forms of social behavior, however simple or complex, crude or highly organized, rudimentary or well developed.[2]

The notion of an isolated individual form is an abstraction which may be useful from time to time, but it is belied by the basic facts of the processes of the sustenance and reproduction of life.

These social processes, and all other types of social interaction which are similar in character to them or are actually derived from them, constitute the necessary presupposition for the emergence of the human social self. This is a general principle in Mead's thinking. The attributes of an individual form are to be given their ultimate explanation in terms of the social processes characterizing the group to which that form belongs.[3] These processes are "temporally," "logically," and "biologically" anterior to the emergence of an individual form--in this case, the minded self.[4] Mead writes:

> The primitive situation is that of the social act which involves the interaction of different forms, which involves,

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[1] MSS, p. 228. [2] MSS, p. 228.

[3] MSS, pp. 7, 49-50, 222-226. [4] MSS, pp. 186, 222.

> therefore, the adjustment of the conduct of these different forms to each other, in carrying out the social process.[1]

The content of the self is by and large these processes of social interaction as they are internalized within the individual form.[2]

Since this is the case, it will be well to examine the character and extension of social conduct. It should be clear from the beginning that social conduct is the universal characteristic of all life forms, from the most simple to the most complex.[3] It is a term descriptive of a wide variety of behavior which involves the stimulation of other forms, and thus to some degree their cooperation. Mead describes social conduct as follows:

> By social conduct I refer simply to that which is mediated by the stimulations of other animals belonging to the same group of living forms, which lead to responses which again affect these other forms--thus fighting, reproduction, parental care, much of animal play, hunting, etc., are the results of primitive instincts or impulses which are set going by the stimulation of one form by another, and these stimulations again lead to responses which affect other forms.[4]

A descriptive terminology for such interaction would be cooperative adjustive response, although Mead did not employ these words in this exact manner. When he defines the category of the social act per se, he refers to it as: ". . . the class of acts which involve the cooperation of more than one individual, and whose object as defined by the act, in the sense of Bergson, is a social object."[5]

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[1] MSS, p. 45.

[2] MSS, p. 188.

[3] MSS, pp. 55-56, 227-244.

[4] SW, p. 135.

[5] SW, p. 279. Also quoted in MSS, p. 7 n.7. See also SW, p. 123.

The introduction of the term "social object" in this definition recalls to attention the basic teleological character of the act.[1] Activity is directed toward an object or a consummation, and social activity is no exception to this principle. The difference between an individual act and a social act lies in the presence of the phenomenon of "cooperative" behavior in the phases of the latter as it progresses toward its object. Mead writes:

> I mean by a social object one that answers to all the parts of the complex act, though these parts are found in the conduct of different individuals. The objective of the act is then found in the process of the group, not in those of the separate individuals alone.[2]

It must be emphasized that the social object is not an object that is held in common by the participants in the social act. Social conduct in which this is the case is restricted to that of human selves who are able to hold the responses of others in their minds. But in social conduct in its most generic aspect, the object belongs to the community of involved individual forms as a whole, and is not present to the individual form as a part. The individual does not "know" what his community of organisms is seeking as a whole. He simply performs his proper response to the proper stimulus. Such a situation is much more analogous to the assembly line of a large manufacturing plant than it is to a football game. Or in insect societies, for example, social conduct is based upon physiological differentiation rather than mental cooperation.[3] The same is often true of vertebrate conduct, and may even characterize the conduct of human vertebrates. The social object belongs to the entire cooperative process considered as a whole, and Mead points out that when a woman expends her entire parental impulse upon a poodle, she does not have the full social object in her mind (that object being the maintenance of the species).[1]

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[1] See above, ch. 1, p. 114.

[2] SW, pp. 279-280. Also quoted in MSS, p. 7 n.7.

[3] MSS, pp. 231, 235, 238; SW, p. 280.

The question now arises as to the manner in which the plurality of individual forms engaged in social conduct stimulate one another to carry out their segment of the act as a whole. Mead's answer is that the mechanism of mutual adjustive response within a social act is the "gesture."[2]

> What is the basic mechanism by which the social process goes on? It is the mechanism of gesture, which makes possible the appropriate responses to one another's behavior of the different individual organisms involved in the social process. Within any given social act, an adjustment is effected, by means of gestures, of the actions of one organism involved to the actions of another; the gestures are movements of the first organism which act as specific stimuli calling forth the (socially) appropriate responses of the second organism. The field of the operation of gestures is the field within which the rise and development of human intelligence has taken place through the process of the symbolization of experience which gestures--especially vocal gestures--have made possible.[3]

These gestures are phases of a larger social act which function as stimuli to the responses of other forms, and thus are the beginnings of smaller acts within larger acts.[4] As such beginnings, they carry the behavioral import of the whole act within themselves.[5] That is, they indicate to the other form what it is to do.

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[1] SW, p. 280.

[2] Mead acknowledged his indebtedness to Wilhelm Wundt's Volkerpschologie (2 vols; Leipzig: W. Englemann, 1904) for his conception of the gesture. See MSS, p. 42n2.

[3] MSS, pp. 13-14. [4] MSS, pp. 69n7, 43; SW, p. 286. [5] MSS, p. 53.

The functional or behavioral form of these definitions and descriptions of the gesture must be emphasized. The gesture always arises in the process of conduct, and anything whatsoever that so arises and elicits a response from the other serves as a gesture. Thus a sudden snort, a baring of the teeth, an initiation of contact, the cry of an infant, the flight of the sentinel of the herd, etc. all come under the heading of gestures.

The social process may be described at base as a "conversation" of gestures. The term "conversation" does not indicate thoughtful speech, but merely the conveyance from one form to another of what is to be done.[1] Nothing is shared in common between the two forms, save their common participation in the social act. The sentinal of a herd of animals does not think to itself: "I sense danger, therefore I must flee, and by my flight warn the others." Nor do the rest of the herd think to themselves: "The sentinel is fleeing; this means danger, so we had better flee also." The situation is rather that the sentinel simply starts and flees when he senses the alien sound or smell, and the rest of the herd is startled into flight by this gesture. The action of the sentinel was spontaneous, and so was that of the herd. It was not an act "intended" to convey a particular message that would be "understood" in its intended sense. Yet by it a social act took place. Mead allows there is a considerable amount of such "intelligent" conduct that takes place in the social conduct

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[1] MSS, p. 14.

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of animals, but he finds in it no common meanings such as characterize the social conduct of human beings.

A further example may facilitate the understanding of the point Mead is making. He frequently illustrates the primitive conversation of gestures with a description of a dog fight.[1] A dog fight is a form of social conduct, requiring as it does the participation of at least two dogs. In a dog fight there is much growling, snapping, lunging, retreating, etc. Each of these activities is a gesture, in that it stimulates the other dog to adjust its actions accordingly. A lunge indicates a retreat, the retreat indicates pursuit, the pursuit indicates a countering snap, etc. Back and forth between the dogs this conversation of gestures takes place. None of the gestures is thought out in a reflective sense. Each is a spontaneous reacting to the conduct of the other dog. And, very importantly, none represents a meaning shared in common between the dogs. Quite the contrary. One dog's lunge "means" rage to him, while to the other dog it "means" an instinctive withdrawal for self preservation. But even though the "meaning" of the gesture is different for both animals, the social act proceeds by its agency.

Nor is this state of affairs unfamiliar in human conduct. Mead points out that much of the activity in the sports of boxing and fencing is carried out at the same level.[2] The participant may of course consciously or thoughtfully fake a movement in order to draw his opponent off guard, but a great many of his acts are completed

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[1] _MSS_, pp. 14, 42, 63. [2] _MSS_, p. 43.

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before he is able to think about them. It would be a poor boxer indeed who had to think about the blow aimed at his chin before he was able to ward it off or duck it!

The absence of thought in the conversation of gestures--the fact that the meaning of the gesture is not shared in common by all participants in the social act--means that the conversation of gestures is "non-significant." This is not to say that it is not important. It is tremendously important, for it is the means by which primitive social conduct takes place. But "significance" is a technical term in Mead's nomenclature, and has a very precise meaning. It is an emergent phenomenon having to do with language, with meanings that are shared in common by all participants in the act. The conversation of gestures (such as that of a dog fight) is not yet language, but it is the sort of a process out of which language arises.[1] When the conversation of gestures is internalized--brought within the organism--there is the beginning both of language and of the self.

The conversation of gestures is, however, meaningful in the non-significant sense of the term "meaning." A meaning is an objective relation in conduct, objective in the sense that a given stimulus elicits a given response.[2] Such a relation is a resultant whenever a living form exercises its selective power in constituting its environment and in being constituted by it.[3] The meaning of a food, for example, is to be eaten. There is no such thing as food until some living organism with the proper assimilative system constitutes an object as food. Mead says: "Meaning is a content of an object which is dependent upon the relation of an organism or a group of organisms to it."[1] In this manner living forms bestow meanings upon the objects constituting their environments. There is no element of thought involved in such an elementary investiture of meaning, but the meaning is nevertheless there in nature as a non-significant form of conduct.

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[1] MSS, p. 14. [2] MSS, pp. 75-82. [3] MSS, p. 77.

The basis of meaning, or the triadic relation of meaning, is coextensive with the structure of the social act. Mead explains this relation in the following sentences:

> Meaning is thus a development of something objectively there as a relation between certain phases of the social act; it is not a psychical addition to that act and it is not an "idea" as traditionally conceived. A gesture by one organism, the resultant of the social act in which the gesture is an early phase, and the response of another organism to the gesture, are the relata in a triple or threefold relationship of gesture to first organism, of gesture to second organism, and of gesture to subsequent phases of the given social act; and this threefold relationship constitutes the matrix within which meaning arises, or which develops into the field of meaning.[2]

Once the dynamics of this triadic relationship are understood, the definition of meaning can be shortened to: "The meaning of a gesture on the part of one organism is the adjustive response of another organism to it. . ."[3] This is a thoroughly functional or behavioral conception of a meaning. Meaning is simply the adjustive response of an organism to the stimulus it receives in social conduct.[1] Recourse to the concept of the mind is neither stated nor implied. The mechanism of meaning is thus present in the social act before the emergence of consciousness or awareness of meaning occurs."[2] The triadic meaning relationship is more fundamental than mind, and in fact is the basis for the subsequent emergence of mind. The emergence of mind and the self occurs when the non-significant meanings characterizing the conversation of gestures become the significant symbols of language. It is to this subject that attention is now directed.

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[1] MSS, p. 80.

[2] MSS, p. 76. See also MSS, pp. 80-81.

[3] MSS, p. 80.

The Genesis and Character of Language

The defining characteristic of that type of social behavior which goes by the term "language" is that the user of language affects himself by his action in the same way that he affects others.[3] He shares his language with a whole linguistic community or universe of discourse to which he belongs. The instruments of language are commonly assumed to be words, either spoken or written, but in Mead's view the phenomenon of language embraces somewhat more than verbal activity alone. With the biography of Helen Keller in mind he states: "There is a possibility of language whenever a stimulus can affect the individual as it affects the other."[1] In the case of Miss Keller that stimulus had to be of a tactual character, rather than auditory or visual. But considering all cases, Mead is of the opinion that there are "an indefinite number of signs or symbols" which may serve the purpose of language.[2] This presumably opens up the field of language to any of the ways in which a man (or, at least in theory, any living form) may affect himself as he affects others. This commonality of effect, to repeat, is the criterion of what is language and what is not.

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[1] An act such as the eating of food may also be included under the category of a social act, in that it requires an other for its completion. The meaning of the food--the eating of it--is the response of the organism to the stimulus it receives from the food object. The food-stimulus is of course a much more elementary type of gesture than those that have been considered in the preceding pages, but it is behaviorally the same sort of phenomenon. From this point of view the importance of the social dimension of Mead's thought, reflecting the notion of relativity, is seen in its broadest extension.

[2] MSS, p. 77.

[3] MSS, p. 75.

Language emerges in experience when meanings become "significant symbols." A symbol in Mead's usage is a stimulus for which the response is given in advance.[3] The symbol picks out certain particular characteristics of a situation (i.e., certain stimuli) so that the response to them can be present in the individual apart from his actually enacting these responses.[4] The response to the stimulus is delayed by means of the symbol.[5] Having this delayed response within the individual organism enables that organism (assuming it has the proper neural equipment) to relate various responses to one another in order to pick out the ones which best serve the act in which he is engaged.[6] This kind of activity with delayed responses is what characterizes consciousness or mind. Symbols are

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[1] MSS, p. 149. [2] MSS, pp. 13-14. [3] MSS, p. 181.

[4] MSS, p. 120. [5] MSS, p. 121. [6] MSS, p. 123.

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the very stuff of mental activity. Mead writes:

> The symbol is more than a mere substitute stimulus--more than a mere stimulus for a conditional response or reflex. For the conditional reflex--the response to a mere substitute stimulus--does not or need not involve consciousness; whereas _the response to a symbol does and must involve consciousness_.[1] (Italics mine.)

In conscious activity, as contrasted to the activity of conditional reflexes, one is able by means of symbols to select those stimuli to which he shall respond, and to organize these responses into an intelligent plan of action. The holding of responses and the organization of them in various combinations without actually enacting them, is a characteristic of human behavior alone, and serves to differentiate man from the rest of the animal kingdom.[2]

That symbols are "significant" simply means that in social conduct the response to the symbolized stimulus is shared in common. Put in terms of the triadic relationship of meaning, the organism giving the gesture shares the response of the second organism to it. The gesturing organism knows the end of the social act even as it initiates it. Or as Mead puts it:

> Gestures become significant symbols when they implicitly arouse in an individual making them the same response which they explicitly arouse, or are supposed to arouse, in other individuals, the individuals to whom they are addressed; . . .[3]

Because the response to the gesture that is a significant symbol is in the giver of the gesture as well as in the one to whom the gesture is given, one can say that the gesture is "meant."[4] The gestures in the non-significant conversation of gestures are not meant in this fashion, as there is no commonality of response. There the response belongs to the second organism alone. In significant conversation the response belongs to all organisms involved in the social act. This means as well that the goal of social activity proceeding by means of significant symbols may be present in each of the involved individuals. There is a much higher degree of cooperation possible in social acts carried out by means of significant conversation or language than in those characterized only by the non-significant conversation of gestures.

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[1] _MSS_, p. 122n29.

[2] _MSS_, p. 94; _SW_, p. 110.

[3] _MSS_, p. 47.

[4] _MSS_, p. 45.

The meanings characterizing language are thus very different from the meanings arising in more primitive social processes. Non-significant meanings do convey to other organisms what they are to do, but there is an increment of sociality in significant meanings. A significant meaning not only communicates, but it is communicable; and it involves a behavioral participation in the other. Communicability means that, through the use of symbols, the meanings that arise in the social process can be utilized as tools or building blocks in the attainment of social goals. It further means that responses can be gotten into an individual, and that the individual can manipulate these responses purposefully, without the individual's ever having actually enacted the experience for which the meaning stands. Participation means that, again through symbols, the individual has the responses of others within himself. To the extent that he himself responds as the other responds, he has functionally become the other by occupying the perspective of the other. The symbol occupies both perspectives, and those who have the symbol within them also occupy both perspectives. Mutual participation in the perspective of the other signifies that the distance separating them is overcome. Communicability and participation in the other are the chief characteristics of significant meanings, and the basic principles of human social organization.[1]

The communicability and participation in the other characterizing significant symbols or meanings illustrates their universality. A universal, interpreted behavioristically, is a single response that may be given to an indefinite number of particular stimuli in which that response is recognized.[2] Such "recognition" is an empirical outgrowth of social behavior. For example, if an individual is engaged in the social act of fighting and loses his carefully fashioned club, he does not postpone his response of disabling his foe until he can find the club. Instead he reaches for whatever is handy--a large bone, a branch, a stone--and carries out his response with it. There is something in the club, bone, branch and stone particulars that is recognized as universal, which serves as a stimulus to the identical response of skull-bashing. This recognition of a common factor is the basic dynamic operative in the emergence of universals. Mead writes: "As long as this element serves as a stimulus, calls out this response, one can say that the particular comes under this universal."[3]

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[1] PA, pp. 81n15, 253, 546.

[2] MSS, pp. 83-85.

[3] MSS, p. 85.

All symbols are universal.[1] They carry within them a common response in all those for whom the symbol exists. Every significant meaning has this characteristic. One cannot speak meaningfully of an absolute particular, for meaningful speech always involves at least one other who shares the universal response.[2] In actual linguistic behavior this universality extends as far as the boundaries of the social process or community within which the significant symbols of language have emerged.[3] Within these boundaries there is behavioristically established what Mead, borrowing a logicians' term, calls a "universe of discourse."[4]

> This universe of discourse is constituted by a group of individuals carrying on and participating in a common social process of experience and behavior, within which these gestures or symbols have the same or common meanings for all members of that group. . . . A common world exists. . . . only insofar as there is a common (group) experience.[5]

This common world or "generalized other" is the sole source of the emergence of a universal concept.[6] Within this group the universal concept may be addressed to any particular member in the expectation that the proper response will be forthcoming. Universals pepresent the persistent or enduring characters of the passing events comprising the social process.[7] They are these enduring characters bmought within the self.

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[1] MSS, p. 146. [2] MSS, p. 146. [3] MSS, p. 195.

[4] It should be clear that the "universe" referred to in this conception of the universal is prescribed by the empirical social situation. It is not universal in the sense of being all-encompassing, although this latter extension always exists as an implicit linguistic possibility.

[5] MSS, p. 89, 89n19. [6] PA, p. 275; PP, p. 87; SW, p. 245.

[7] PA, p. 371.

Because universals are emergents in the social process, there can be no question of assigning to them any sort of timeless metaphysical existence of their own. They belong entirely to the social context in which they are born. Mead puts it this way:

> Alternative ways of acting under an indefinite number of different particular conditions or in an indefinite number of different particular situations--ways which are more or less identical for an indefinite number of normal individuals--are all that universals (however treated in logic or metaphysics) really amount to; *they are meaningless apart from the social acts in which they are implicated and from which they derive their significance*.[1] (Italics mine.)

So long as the universal continues to elicit the appropriate activity in its social context, it retains its universality. When, however, the social context undergoes evolutionary change, that which was formerly universal may lose its universality and be succeeded by a new universal.

Much philosophical confusion has resulted when this empirical dimension of the universal has been overlooked. Mead summarizes his view of what we may perhaps call "relative universality" as follows:

> All the enduring relations have been subject to revision. There remain the logical constants, and the deductions from logical implications. To the same category belong the so-called universals or concepts. They are the elements and structure of a universe of discourse. In so far as in social conduct with others and with ourselves we indicate the characters that endure in the perspective of the group to which we belong and out of which we arise, we are indicating that which relative to our conduct is unchanged, to which, in other words, passage is irrelevant. A metaphysics which lifts these logical elements out of their experiential habitat and endows them with a subsistential being overlooks the fact that the irrelevance to passage is strictly

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[1] *MSS*, p. 90.

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> relative to the situation in conduct within which the reflection arises, that while we can find in different situations a method of conversation and so of thought which proves irrelevant to the differences in the situations, and so provides a method of translation from one perspective to another, this irrelevance belongs only to the wider character which the problem in reflection assumes, and never transcends the social conduct within which the action arises.[1]

In other words, linguistic conduct is a current affair, and the universality of linguistic symbols and concepts endures precisely as long as the social process empirically exhibits it. For universal discourse to be truly universal, therefore, it must continually be revised.[2]

There is a physiological correlate in the organism to the emergence of universal significant symbols in the social process. Mead's term for this correlate is an "attitude." An attitude is an organization of the various parts of the central nervous system which are going to be responsible for an action.[3] Attitudes sensitize the organism to what is about to take place--make the organism "ready" for the future, as it were.[4] The organism's selection of its environment, for example, takes place under the influence of its attitudes.[5] In the case of organisms with a highly developed nervous system, significant symbols function as the appropriate stimuli to release the organized sets of responses that are attitudes.[6] These responses are what are commonly designated in psychological terms as the "ideas" of things.[7]

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[1] MSS, p. 90n21. [2] MSS, p. 269. [3] MSS, pp. 11-12, 86-87.

[4] MSS, p. 86. [5] MSS, p. 128. [6] SW, p. 336.

[7] SW, pp. 287, 336.

An "idea," physiologically viewed, is a set of neural behavioral responses which are there in the organism in advance of the actual stimulation of the object itself. All they require for their enacted expression is the stimulus of the thing of which they are the idea. When the stimulus is given, these attitudes are aroused and seek this expression. An aroused attitude seeking expression is, again speaking physiologically, what a "meaning" is.[1] The idea is broader in scope than a meaning, for the idea embraces a number of possible meanings. One may have the idea of a book, and this idea includes many possible meanings such as writing, reading, borrowing, selling, etc. But when the book-stimulus arises in the course of an act, it will have but one of these meanings. It is thus to be seen that an idea is in most cases incredibly complex, corresponding as it does to all aspects of that universal of which it is the idea. But Mead notes that the central nervous system is also incredibly complex, and sees no difficulty in postulating a neural attitude of equal complexity.[2]

The arousing of an attitude by an appropriate stimulus is the behavioristic substitute for the notion of conscious motive or "purpose."[3] Purposes are physiologically there in the organism; they are not the psychic contributions of a transcendental mind. The fact that ideas, meanings, and purposes have a physiological correlate in attitudes should not, however, obscure the fact that they are socially acquired. Attitudes are comprised of responses, and these responses have been brought into the organism by participation in the social process.

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[1] SW, p. 336.

[2] MSS, pp. 85-87.

[3] MSS, p. 100.

Universal discourse by means of significant symbols is an emergent activity stemming from the non-significant conversation of gestures. This is true both genetically and in terms of the social development of a human child. The fundamental character of language, it will be recalled, is that the gestures or symbols of language affect the giver of the gesture in exactly the same fashion as they affect those to whom they are addressed. In theory any kind of gesture at all may become significant or emerge as a universal. Mead, however, discerns in the vocal gesture a characteristic which makes it particularly suitable for a role in significant speech. When an organism emits a vocal gesture, that gesture falls upon its own auditory apparatus just like it does upon the auditory apparatus of other participants in the social act.[1] There is a physiological sameness in this situation that usually is not characteristic of situations in which the gestures employed are of another type. One does not, for example, see his own facial expression as the other sees it. Nor does one usually see or feel his bodily movements as they are seen or felt by others, although movement and touch may in certain instances come to signify the same thing for both parties. But it is much more likely that a common or significant response will emerge from that which is auditory. Mead writes:

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[1] MSS, p. 62; SW, pp. 136-137, 287.

> We hear our own vocal gestures as others hear them. . . . it has been the vocal gesture that has preeminently provided the medium of social organization in human society. It belongs historically to the beginning of the act, for it arises out of the change in breathing rhythm that accompanies the preparation for sudden action, those actions to which other forms must be nicely adjusted.[1]

Thus it is not only the fact that auditory reception of the vocal gesture is likely to be the same for all participants, but also its position in the act in progress makes the vocal gesture peculiarly suited to emerge as a significant symbol. The significant symbol carries with it the meaning or response of the whole act, and it is presumably easier to associate the whole act with the gesture belonging to its inception than with a gesture that merely accompanies the act at some later phase.

It should be noted, however, that the employment at the beginning of a social act of a vocal gesture that falls identically upon the ears of all the participants in that social act does not explain how the vocal gesture becomes significant. Common stimulation of the ears, in other words, is not the same as common response to that stimulation. Mead is aware of this difficulty, although he is unable in the final analysis to dissolve it entirely. As he analyzes the situation, the vocal gesture arouses a "tendency" in the organism to respond to its own gesture in the same way that the other organism does.[2] He is not too clear concerning the nature of this "tendency." He does point to the manner in which vocalization appears to reinforce itself, as for example in the singing of birds and in the babbling of babies.[1] In these situations it seems that noise begets further noise. When a particular response becomes attached to a particular sound, and when two or more organisms in a social act repeat the same sound, that response gets proportionately more emphasis than it would have if only the other organism(s) were repeating the sound.[2] The process would appear to be similar to association or to simple conditioning of a response.[3] This perhaps does not entirely explain the connection of the stimulus and the response, but it may be that such connections are ultimately inexplicable. That which cannot be explained may, however, be described. Mead's description of the process wherein common responses to common vocal stimuli emerge is contained in his notion of "role-taking."

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[1] _SW_, p. 287.

[2] _MSS_, pp. 63, 65; _SW_, p. 287.

Before examining this notion in detail it would be well to re-emphasize in summary fashion the presupposition upon which Mead's understanding of a meaningful world is based--that the life process is fundamentally a process of social activity. It is important to have some understanding of the manner in which the significant symbols of language emerge out of this process, i.e., through the emergence of common responses to common gesture-stimuli. But it is perhaps even more important to appreciate fully what has taken place when language does emerge. The emergence of language signifies that a portion of empirical social conduct has been "internalized" in such a manner that the experience of one organism or of a small group of organisms can be shared, criticized, compounded, and expanded by all other organisms belonging to the same universe of discourse without these organisms actually having to live through the experience themselves. Language, in other words, is concrete experience made into pliable tools of reality construction, and in this sense Mead's view of man may be expressed in the terminology *Homo Loquens*. Man is above all else the user of language.

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[1] MSS, pp. 64-65.

[2] MSS, p. 64.

[3] Mead denies, however, that the process of conditioning is an adequate explanation for everything involved in the emergence of significance. See MSS, pp. 100-109.

The Emergence of the Self Through Role-Taking

The emergence of a significant symbol out of a vocal gesture is an instance of the behavioral mechanism which lies at the base of all those behavioral structures which are distinctively human; specifically, of the mind and the self. Mead describes this mechanism in terms of the occurrence of an interchange of position, wherein the giver of the gesture occupies the place of the receiver, and the receiver occupies that of the giver. His term for this interchange is "role-taking." The gesturing organism implicitly responds to its own gesture as the other organism explicitly responds to it. This implicit response is in a sense an enactment of the part or role of the other. Mead points out that this is not a sophisticated enactment of the other's role, such as the performance of an actor who studies and practices until he is able to re-create a particular character.[1]

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[1] *MSS*, p. 161.

It is much more spontaneous than that. The organism's own gesture simply calls out in itself the response of the other, and the individual as a result finds himself in the role of the other.

The terminology "finds himself in the role of the other" is advisedly chosen, for this is precisely how the self arises in experience, according to Mead. Responding to its own gesture in the role of the other gives the organism a new vantage point from which to look back upon its emergent self. Without this organism-transcending vantage point there is no experience of selfhood. The self is an emergent structure of the responses of others to the gestures of the individual organism.

The self as a subject is not experienced. The self as an object is the experience of the responses of others to its gestures--responses which the emergent self shares identically with these others. Mead puts it this way:

> The individual experiences himself as such, not directly, but only indirectly, from the particular standpoints of other individual members of the same social group, or from the generalized standpoint of the social group as a whole to which he belongs.[1]

And again:

> It is just because the individual finds himself taking the attitudes of the others who are involved in his conduct that he becomes an object for himself. It is only by taking the roles of others that we have been able to come back to ourselves.[2]

To become a self, the individual organism becomes a part of its own environmental field, there becoming a part of the environmental stimuli to which it will respond.[3] This is not done intentionally--at least

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[1] MSS, p. 138. [2] SW, pp. 283-284. [3] MSS, p. 172.

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not in the primitive stages of selfhood--but it is something that simply emerges in the process of social interaction. As Mead puts it, "In the process of communication the individual is an other before he is a self. It is in addressing himself in the role of an other that his self arises in experience."[1] Thus the situation is not one of the self's projecting itself into the other. There is no self to do the projecting. At all levels of experience, the self and the other arise in experience together in the context of a particular social act.[2] Seen in this light, role-taking may be understood as a mutual becoming. Behaviorally speaking, the self is the response of the other; and the other, by its response, duplicates that aspect of the self.

It may be helpful at this point to recall the discussion of "resistance" presented in chapter one.[3] It was there noted how Mead suggests that physical objects have a "pushiness" which actively resists the pressure of the hand when it is applied to the object. This resistance is shared mutually by the hand and the object. Because the resistances offered are the same for both, a kind of interchange of identity may be said to have occurred. The mechanism of role-taking is clearly in evidence here. Resistance serves the same function in physical experience as do significant symbols in linguistic experience. The organism occupies the role of the physical object by responding to its own effort of pressure. This brings the organism outside of itself, and represents the condition necessary for the experience of itself as an object. Mead is unequivocal about this. The organism becomes an object to itself by occupying the role of a physical thing, and it does this by responding as an other to its own effort of pressure.[1]

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[1] _SW_, p. 312.   [2] _SW_, p. 314.

[3] See above, ch. 1, pp. 124-125.

It is Mead's contention that the identification of the other (whose role the emergent self occupies) as a physical object belongs to what may be termed a "secondary" level of experience. The primary objectification of the self and the other is of a social character. Mead writes:

> Such a development of the physical thing over against the physical self is an abstraction from an original social experience, for it is primarily in social conduct that we stimulate ourselves to act toward ourselves as others act towards us and thus identify ourselves with others and become objects to ourselves. . . . The earliest objects are social objects, and all objects are at first social objects. Later experience differentiates the social from the physical objects, but the mechanism of the experience of things over against a self as an object is the social mechanism.[2]

The term "social" in this quotation may be interpreted as signifying the realm of the interpersonal--the conversation of gestures which is internalized when these gestures become significant and a self emerges. The "social mechanism" to which he refers is role-taking. What he is suggesting, then, is that an infant first becomes a rudimentary self through interaction with those persons closest to it, primarily the mother. As its interpersonal contacts grow and become more complex through the rapid increase of significant symbols that come into its command, the infant abstracts the difference between persons and things. It comes to realize that things do not respond to it the way persons do. The responses of things are more limited--and perhaps more consistent. But prior to this realization the infant responds to every perceptual object as though it were personal in character. Babies are often noticed having "conversations" with their toys and the furniture.

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[1] PA, pp. 150, 163, 186, 428-429.

[2] PA, pp. 428-429.

The relationship of the social mechanism of role-taking and the experience of physical objects and the self as an object is much more broadly founded than simply upon observations of infant behavior. The phenomenon of role-taking is deeply revelatory of the notion of relativity, and represents an instance of the sociality that characterizes everything that is included under the generic term "reality." The notion of relativity is a statement of the way in which every identity is a product of a field of interrelated parts. It means not only that reality is perspectival in character, involving a plurality of these systems of relatedness; but also that there are aspects of these various systems which can only be accounted for in terms of the other systems.[1] This is a fundamental datum of modern physics. Role-taking is a corresponding exemplification of relativity in human evolution and development. Neither the self nor its environment can be accounted for apart from reference to the other. It is in the act of role-taking, when the emerging self occupies two roles simultaneously, that reality attains configuration in experience. The role-taking or minded self is the highest instance of the sociality that characterizes the relativistic universe.[1]

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[1] __PP__, p. 62.

But the process of role-taking begins, as we have seen, at a very rudimentary level--when the individual first responds to his own gesture with the response of the other as it has been given to him in the social act. The origins of this sort of behavior are lost in evolutionary history, and they are even somewhat obscured in the earliest stages of child development. Thus Mead's whole social behavioristic account of the genesis of selfhood, although highly empirical in flavor, is actually an hypothesis of a speculative sort. Yet it is not without some empirical evidence in its support. By comparison with other forms of life, the human infant remains in a relationship of near-total dependence upon the members of its immediate family for an extended period of time. During this period of dependency the interests of the infant center upon those individuals who are caring for him. This gives him, according to Mead, a "remarkable opportunity for the play back and forth of this sort of taking of the roles of others."[2] It is in observation of the play and games of children that Mead finds empirical support for his theory of role-taking.

One example of role-taking in children's play is found in those situations where a child will actually create an imaginary companion with whom to converse and to participate in cooperative ventures.[3] More common are those situations in which the child plays at being someone else--a mommy or a spaceman, for example.[4] Here the child

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[1] PP, p. 86. See ch. 1 above, pp. 11-47, 104-112.

[2] MSS, p. 364. [3] MSS, p. 150. [4] MSS, pp. 149-160, 363-366.

takes on a well-defined role, and this by means of self-stimulation alone. This is the fundamental characteristic of play which Mead seeks to bring into prominence. The roles of mother or spaceman are clearly a segment of the ongoing social process; but, more significantly, Mead points out that the stimulation to the taking of such roles comes from the child himself. "This means," he writes, "that the child has a certain set of stimuli which call out in itself the responses that they would call out in others, and which answer to the role in question."[1] Or as he puts it elsewhere:

> The individual stimulates himself to the response which he is calling out in the other person, and then acts in some degree in response to that situation. In play the child does definitely act out the role which he himself has aroused in himself. It is that which gives, as I have said, a definite content in the individual which answers to the stimulus that affects him as it affects somebody else.[2]

Significance is a reflection of specific social roles or segments of the social process which a plurality of individuals have within themselves in such a manner that they can call forth the responses of these roles from themselves, apart from the stimulation of others. The play of young animals of non-human species does not exhibit this self-stimulating character, but exhibits rather a strongly developed set of responses that are of an instinctual character.[3] The advantage of being able to stimulate oneself to assume the role of the other is that one gains a measure of control over his own responses in doing so.[4] One is enabled to look upon his own self from an outside

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[1] MSS, p. 150.

[2] MSS, p. 161.

[3] MSS, p. 365.

[4] MSS, p. 254.

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vantage point, and from that vantage point to direct what his own further responses shall be. He has, in a specific behavioral sense, transcended himself; and Mead's contention is that the process of self-transcendence and the emergence of a self are exactly coincident.

The self that emerges in a child in this fashion is not an integrated or consistent self. The role taking of childhood play is fragmental or successive in character.[1] The child is now one role and now another, often in a seemingly endless sequence of quite disparate roles. There is a lack of cohesiveness. What the child is at one moment does not necessarily determine what he shall be at the next. The child cannot be counted upon to exhibit consistent responses at all times. This belongs to a later stage of development in which the roles he has within him become organized into a whole. But the relatively erratic historical route of the young child's emerging self should not be allowed to obscure the importance of the role-taking that is manifested in it. Mead summarizes his view as follows:

> It is evident that out of just such conduct as this, out of addressing one's self and responding with the appropriate response of another, "self-consciousness" arises. The child during this period of infancy creates a forum within which he assumes various roles, and the child's self is gradually integrated out of these socially different attitudes, always retaining the capacity of addressing itself and responding to that address with a reaction that belongs in a certain sense to another. He comes to the adult period with the mechanism of a mind.[2]

The process of the integration of the self may be observed in the playing of childhood games. In a game, as contrasted with play,

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[1] MSS, p. 159.

[2] MSS, pp. 365-366.

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the individual child takes the role of a plurality of others rather than an individual other.

> If we contrast play with the situation in an organized game, we note the essential difference that the child who plays in a game must be ready to take the attitude of everyone else involved in that game, and that these roles must have a definite relationship to each other.[1]

In a baseball game, for example, the child is implicated with eight other individuals in the social act of attempting to get the opposing side out. In this process each member of the team must have within himself both the rules of the game (which implicate the response of the class of baseball players as a whole) and the strategy involved in fielding balls and throwing to bases (which implicates the responses of the members of his own team). No individual can adequately function in a social game unless he has the responses of the other participants within himself, and has them in a coordinated manner. He knows what he is to do only in the context of what he can count upon the others to do. The rules of the game are the expression of this coordinated general response, and successful participation in the game implies that each individual player is in a sense a "generalized player" who is present in each component part of the game.[2] Or as Mead elsewhere describes the situation:

> The game has a logic, so that such an organization of the self is rendered possible; there is a definite end to be obtained; the actions of different individuals are all related to each other with reference to that end so that they do not conflict; one is not in conflict with himself in the attitude of another man on the team.[3]

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[1] MSS, p. 151. [2] PA, p. 374. [3] MSS, pp. 158-159.

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The self, in other words, receives its content or is controlled in its development by the responses of others and by reflecting back upon himself from that vantage point. The unity of the self is a function of how well the roles of these others are coordinated with one another. A lack of coordination, as is found in the situation of play, means that the constantly emerging self also lacks coordination or unity. But when the roles of others are coordinated as they are when a game is being played--when the others are integrated into a "generalized other"--this coordination is reflected in the self and a more consistent identity begins to emerge. There is, according to Mead, no integrated self-identity apart from the emergence in experience of a generalized other. This generalized other is found in the very "nature" of the child, and finds its expression in the immediate experience of the child.[1] The content of this experience is a segment of the cooperate social process internalized through role-taking.

Childhood play and games are thus, in Mead's eyes, events which reveal quite transparently the role-taking process through which the individual human infant achieves the definiteness of an integrated self and becomes a member of the human community at large. In this vein, he writes:

> What takes place in this dramatic fashion in children's play and games evidently goes on in the formation of the child's personality in the life of the family, and of other groups in which the child finds himself. Through assuming the roles of others, to which he has stimulated himself by his own conduct, he is

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[1] MSS, p. 160.

> organizing them into generalized attitudes and becomes a member of the family, of the school, and of his set.[1]

Role-taking is thus, in the final analysis, the mechanism whereby otherness, in the form of social conduct, becomes selfhood, in the form of an organized set of relatively stable responses. These responses equip the individual for active and harmonious participation in the same social process which he has internalized through this role-taking.

The internalization process is one of increasing complexity and results in a self of emergent dimensions in any given phase of the process. But in all phases of the process the self is in large measure a reflection of that process itself. Mead summarizes the emergence of the self in this fashion:

> I have pointed out, then, that there are two general stages in the full development of the self. At the first of these stages, the individual's self is constituted simply by an organization of the particular attitudes of other individuals toward himself and toward one another in the specific social acts in which he participates with them. But at the second stage in the full development of the individual's self that self is constituted not only by an organization of these particular individual attitudes, but also by an organization of the social attitudes of the generalized other or the social group as a whole to which he belongs. . . . the self reaches its full development by organizing these individual attitudes of others into the organized social or group attitudes, and by thus becoming an individual reflection of the general systematic pattern of social or group behavior in which it and others are all involved--a pattern which enters as a whole into the individual's experience in terms of these organized group attitudes which, through the mechanism of his central nervous system, he takes toward himself, just as he takes the individual attitudes of others.[2]

The emergent self is not _merely_ a reflection of the social process internalized through role-taking, but insofar as the self enters as an object into the individual's own experience, it has this characteristic. The other aspect of the self--its unique and active aspect which Mead terms the "I"--does not directly enter into the individual's own experience. This will be discussed in a subsequent section of this chapter.[1] Our concern at present is with the social origin of the self and with its reflexive character.

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[1] _PA_, pp. 374-375.

[2] _MSS_, p. 158.

The Mind as the Self's Linguistic Field of Conduct

Mead's conception of the self, as it has been developed to this point, treats the self as a social product which emerges when the individual transcends himself in the role of an other, through participating in social acts characterized by the use of the significant symbols of language. This conception is descriptive of the evolutionary genesis of selves, of the development of new selves in the context of the family, and of the emergence of a self at any given point in an individual's conduct. Selfhood is always the product of the social mechanism of role-taking--the role of the individual other in primitive situations and the role of the generalized other in more socialized situations--and this role-taking is observed in the usage of language. For this reason we have described man in Mead's view as *Homo Loquens*, the being who uses language.[2]

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[1] See below, "The Generalized Other and the Structure of the Self," pp. 218-241.

[2] See above, p. 38.

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However, another characterization of man which has had a long tradition of popular usage is that man is Homo Sapiens, the being who thinks. This raises for consideration the question of the relationship of language and thought in Mead's view. Coemergent with the self in linguistic behavior is the phenomenon of mind. How is this to be understood? What is the character of mind? What is mental activity? To what extent is there an element of mentality in forms of life other than human, and in the world of inanimate things? What is the relationship between the mind and the environing world? These questions, and others similar to them, constitute the subject matter of this stage of the presentation of the notion of the generalized other through a consideration of Mead's view of the self.

The discussion shall begin with the general notion of "consciousness." This is a highly ambiguous term, as Mead frequently notes, and has been freighted with a number of meanings which often have little to do with one another.[1] Mead himself uses the term in three distinct senses, although he prefers to use the terminology "self-consciousness" and "the private" for two of the three.[2] In order to facilitate making our way through this rather tangled maze, it will perhaps be well to consider the subject of consciousness from the standpoint of some of the fundamental notions characterizing Mead's thought as a whole, as discussed in the first chapter. This procedure is not intended to imply that Mead's investigations are simply deductive implications from an a priori metaphysic. It is simply a means to placing his analysis of the phenomenon of consciousness in a broader context in order to facilitate understanding.

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[1] See, for example, MSS, pp. 27-33.

[2] MSS, pp. 111-112.

Mead's convictions regarding the relativistic character of the universe and the self-contained character of the evolutionary process would seem to preclude his treating the phenomenon of consciousness as though it were a reality of a transcendental order. This is in fact the case. He denies any view that treats consciousness as a substantial capacity for experience or a series of feeling-states belonging to each individual human being quite apart from his relation- to other human beings. Mead feels that any attempt to so locate consciousness within the individual human brain, in parallel with the external world of objects which it is the business of consciousness to experience, sets up on the one hand a world of absolute Newtonian objects which are indifferent to relative viewpoints, and leads on the other hand to a kind of physiological solipsism which is unable to account in a satisfactory manner for communicable experience.[1] Mead's belief in the situational character of the relative universe is also reflected in his rejection of another notion of consciousness prevalent in his time. This view attributes to consciousness only the selection of the secondary characters of objects, leaving the matter of the primary characters to the realm of physics. While this view in a sense represents an improvement over the parallelistic theories of consciousness--as it does recognize that, at least in some respects, the external world is not independent of the experiencing organism--it still falls outside of Mead's viewpoint in that the primary characters of things are somehow exempted from the Einsteinian insight.[1] There is simply no way, in Mead's way of thinking, to deal with any object or process apart from its relations to its context. Reality emerges as a function of these relations.

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[1] MSS, pp. 111-112, 164-165; PA, p. 254.

Speaking more positively, the manner in which the notion of activity seems for Mead to provide a context for the emergence of new realities in an evolving, situational universe provides an important clue to the basic character of consciousness in his thinking. Consciousness must be understood in terms of the conduct of living organisms. Mead describes two conditions which define the emergence of consciousness in the evolutionary process. The first condition is the presence of life, defined as a self-maintaining process in which what occurs in the organism extends beyond the organism and creates an environment out of its own needs. The second condition is that the living organism can react purposively and as a whole to conditions within itself.[2] All living forms meet the first condition. Both plant and animal create a food-environment out of their life-maintaining needs, but only the animal is conscious of being hungry. That is, the phenomenon of consciousness involves both the selectivity which is characteristic of all life, and the further ability to make conditions within the organism a part of the environment to which the organism responds.[1] Or as Mead puts it in one of his articles:

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[1] PA, pp. 73-76, 255.

[2] PP, p. 69.

> If consciousness in evolutionary history, then, has an unambiguous significance, it refers to that stage in the development of life in which the conduct of the individual marks out and defines the future field and objects which make up its environment, and in which emerge characters in the objects and sensitivities in the individuals that answer to each other. There is a relativity of the living individual and its environment, both as to form and content.[2]

Consciousness is thus for Mead a functional relationship rather than a substantial entity or capacity.[3] The poles of this relationship are the organism and the environment. "Consciousness as such," Mead says, "refers to both the organism and its environment, and cannot be located simply in either."[4] Far from being the attribute of the individual organism alone, consciousness as an organism-environment relation refers to what may be called an objective field of conduct. This field belongs to the objective world; only the physiological processes by which consciousness is lost and regained belong solely to the brain of the individual.[5] Consciousness is that aspect of the objective world which emerges in response to the activity in which the organism is engaged.

The consciousness of any given individual organism represents the perspective of that organism. This perspective is at one and the same time selected by the organism and given to the organism by the "other" which is there to be selected. Consciousness is

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[1] PP, p. 71. [2] SW, pp. 277-278. [3] MSS, p. 112.

[4] MSS, p. 332. [5] MSS, p. 112.

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never without its relation to the environing world of "causal" relations which are the conditions to which the organism must conform in its selection.[1]

Yet the world of consciousness is not objective in another sense of the term, in that it represents a reality that still lies in the future. Consciousness as a field of conduct represents a world that is in the process of coming into being. In this sense consciousness is to be regarded as the context of selection, the locus of emergence. As Mead puts it:

> What we term "consciousness" is just that relation of organism and environment in which selection takes place. . . . It is not simply cutting something out and holding it by itself (as the term "selection" seems to suggest), but in this process *there appears or emerges something that was not there before*.[2] (Italics mine.)

Consciousness is the scene of the emergence of new relationships, and thus of new realities. In fact, in the concluding portions of his lectures on social psychology Mead points out that the view of consciousness which he has presented from his behavioristic point of view actually involves the bringing together of the two philosophic concepts of emergence and relativity.[3] Mead views consciousness as an objective field of relatedness, itself an emergent, in which the activity of the organism is creative of emergent configurations of reality in the process of seeking the consummation of its impulses.

In his treatment of consciousness in general as an objective field of conduct, Mead distinguishes among what may be denoted various "levels" of consciousness. These levels range from the very primitive to the very complex. The lowest form of consciousness he calls "feeling."[1] Feelings emerge in the conduct of a living form when the form, acting as a unitive whole, is able to respond purposively to conditions within its own organism.[2] These feelings presumably become more complex in animals possessing more complex central nervous systems. The emergence of consciousness at this level, however simple or complex, is coextensive with the perspective of the conscious animal.[3] It is the objective environment as determined from that particular standpoint. This environment, being selected by the conscious organism, does exhibit certain peculiarities belonging uniquely to that individual organism. But these peculiarities are to be regarded as aspects of the objective world. As Mead puts it:

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[1] For discussions regarding the character of "causality" and its relationship to the "logical" determination of reality by the life form, see above, ch. 1, pp. 55-57, 80-87, 91-92.

[2] *MSS*, p. 333.

[3] *MSS*, pp. 329-333.

> This peculiar environment does not exist in the consciousness of the form as a separate milieu, but the consciousness of the organism consists in the fact that its future conduct outlines and defines its objects.[4]

The objects which constitute the world of the conscious form, in other words, arise in the behavioral responses of the organism to its own sensitivities. They exist as a field of conduct, not as a separate realm of mental stuff.

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[1] PP, p. 68.

[2] PP, pp. 68-70. Mead felt that plant life should be excluded from the category of consciousness, as plants do not react as wholes to their own conditions. It would appear, however, that this is actually a matter for empirical investigation to determine. It may well be that such investigation would reveal that at least some forms of plant life do conform to his minimal description of conscious behavior. However, such a development, while interesting, would not falsify Mead's position. It would merely give it wider application.

[3] SW, pp. 271-273.

[4] SW, p. 272.

Consciousness at this level may be regarded as synonymous with the term "experience."[1] The world which is experienced by the conscious organism is a world that is simply "there." An awareness of sorts is involved in this experience, but Mead denies that it is an awareness "of" certain objects in the sense of reflection or mind.[2] It is awareness in the sense of bare presence of the environment to the organism in its conduct. Mead summarizes:

> Consciousness implies, then, nothing but the presence of other social objects in experience, that is, social objects with whom we enter into experience, and whose existence is involved in our own existence as selves.[3]

Consciousness of the environment in this sense is restricted to the immediacy of the moment, or the "now," as Mead calls it. Out of such consciousness emerges a level of consciousness in which the immediacy of the moment is transcended. This level of consciousness Mead calls self-consciousness or thought, and it represents the operation of what is generally referred to as the mind.[4]

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[1] See above, ch. 1, pp. 119-127.

[2] PA, pp. 147, 360-361. [3] PA, p. 292.

[4] Mead also deals with a third type of consciousness, in addition to consciousness in general and self-consciousness. This type of consciousness he calls the "private," or the "psychic." The fundamental characteristic of this classification is the fact that its contents belong solely to the individual. All emergent notions are initially psychic or private. It goes almost without saying that the fact of limited accessibility has very little to do with the reality represented by this type of consciousness. A full discussion of this category transcends the purpose of this investigation, however, for what is at issue at this point is the self-reference involved in the category of self-consciousness. For the psychic, see SW, pp. 16-18, 46-47, 53, 242; PA, pp. 46-47.

The basic character of the mind is the same as that of the phenomenon of consciousness taken in its more general sense. The mind is fundamentally a field of conduct--the relationship between the individual organism and the environment in which selection and emergence take place. It is not located just in the brain, although a brain is a necessary prerequisite for having a mind. But whereas consciousness in general marks out the environment of what is occurring at the moment, the self-consciousness of the mind extends the field of conduct both forwards and backwards in time. Self-consciousness temporally transcends the dimensions of the present in order to bring the present to more creative fruition. Mead puts the matter this way:

> The field of mind, then, is the larger environment which the activity of the organism calls for but which transcends the present. . . . the field of mind is the temporal extension of the environment of the organism.[1]

The individual is engaged in an activity. This activity stretches forth into the future. How it will be consummated remains an open question. The possibilities for its consummation will be greatly enhanced, however, if the individual is able on the one hand to draw upon past experiences in fashioning that consummation, and on the other hand is able to anticipate the consequences of various projected alternatives without actually enacting them. This is what occurs in the operations of the mind. Mentality brings the resources of the past and the future to bear upon the act that is underway in the present.

The question now arises as to how the field of conduct is thus temporally extended in the operations of the mind, and this question leads right into the analysis of the fundamental character of thought. Thought is at base a linguistic phenomenon--the linguistic activity of the human self. This linguistic activity takes the form of a "conversation" or of "social intercourse."[1] The participants in this type of conversation are the self in the role of the individual and the self in the role of the community or generalized other.[2] "Thought," Mead writes, "is the conversation of this generalized other with the self."[3] Of course this conversation is enclosed within a brain, and the individual components of the generalized other do not literally speak in unison to the individual self.[4] But Mead uses the terms "social intercourse" and "conversation" with reference to thought in a carefully studied sense, and to overlook this dialogic character of thought would be to miss the entire thrust of his behavioristic account of mental phenomena. The individual self, or "I," functionally becomes the generalized other, and from that viewpoint looks back upon itself as a "me"--as it appears in the eyes of the community. As the self thus assumes these differing roles in an ongoing succession, it holds a kind of inner conversation with itself. The important point is that the self in one of its dimensions or phases in

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[1] PP, p. 25.

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[1] MSS, pp. 47, 254; PA, p. 292; SW, p. 246.

[2] The dialectic character of the self, or in Mead's terms, the self in its phases of the "I" and the "me," will be analyzed in the subsequent section, pp. 224-231.

[3] SW, p. 246. [4] SW, p. 291.

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this conversation represents the attitude of the entire community. This self-transcendence in the role of the generalized other brings a wealth of resources to the aid of the self in its individual role. It is this communal aspect of thought, Mead suggests, that is implied in the etymology of the term "consciousness" as an "experience with" (conscius).[1] Thought places the individual in league with the larger group of which he is a part.

Speaking functionally rather than physiologically, the means or tools of the thought process are the significant symbols of language. Mead is quite unequivocal on this point:

> Only in terms of gestures as significant symbols is the existence of mind or intelligence possible; for only in terms of gestures which are significant symbols can thinking--which is simply an internalized or implicit conversation of the individual with himself by means of such gestures--take place.[2]

These significant symbols are the same ones which have arisen in the vocal intercourse of the social processes in which the individual becomes a self. They represent the common responses of the community to events that are shared in common by all members of the community. They are concrete experiences which have been detached from their occurrence in space and time, but which nevertheless retain the behavioral values (meanings) of their spatiotemporal occurrence. As internalized within the individual (the physiological mechanism of such internalization is irrelevant to the point being made), these significant symbols offer the individual a vast storehouse of human experience which transcends his location in space and time. Because he has the community's response to a past event within himself, the individual is able to make that event a part of an internal dialogue in his present regarding what shape the emerging future is to take. He has that resource at his command, together with an indeterminate number of other resources from the community's past experiences which have been encapsulated in the significant symbols of language.

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[1] PA, pp. 411-412. The ultimate derivation is from the Latin verb, scire, to know. See Webster's Third New International Dictionary, 1963.

[2] MSS, p. 47.

Thought consists in the dialogic process of combining and recombining these symbols so as to construct a plan of action for the future. This involves the construction of a number of hypothetical futures, only one of which will be concretely actualized. But these hypothetical futures which emerge out of the thought process will not be divorced from the community's sense of reality because the common voice of the community is always a partner to the dialogue in which they are created. To the extent that the individual is also a partner to the dialogue of his thought, these futures will also exhibit certain dimensions of novelty. These novel dimensions may or may not gain communal acceptance and pass into the significant symbols of language. Only the actual unfolding of the social process itself will determine this. The point is that in the dialogue which is thought, the individual, by means of the community's gift of language, transcends both himself as an individual and his particular spatio-temporal location. Thinking is self-transcendence through language, and it is this which gives man the tremendous amount of control over his environment which he has.

Mead's term for this type of self-transcendence is "reflexiveness," which he defines as "the turning back of the experience of the individual upon himself."[1] Mead puts the matter this way: "Rational conduct always involves a reflexive reference to self, that is, an indication to the individual of the significances which his actions or gestures have for other individuals."[2] The reflexive individual takes the role of the other, in both its individual and generalized dimensions, and in so doing makes the social process as a whole a part of his own experience. Having the social process as a part of his own experience enables the reflexive individual both consciously to adapt himself to the process and also to modify the results of the social acts in which he is engaged by his own contribution to them. Without the ability to transcend himself by reflexively coming to himself in the role of and with the attitude of the other, this would not be possible. "Reflexiveness, then," Mead summarizes, "is the essential condition, within the social process, for the development of mind."[3]

When reflexiveness emerges in the evolutionary process--when individuals enter into conversation with themselves by means of the significant symbols of language--the result is the emergence of "ideas." The essence of an idea is the fact that the behavioral response it calls for is delayed.[4] Mead writes:

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[1] *MSS*, p. 134.

[2] *MSS*, p. 122n29.

[3] *MSS*, p. 134.

[4] *MSS*, p. 25n7.

> Ideas, as distinct from acts, or as failing to issue in overt behavior, are simply what we do not do; they are possibilities of overt responses which we test out implicitly in the central nervous system and then reject in favor of those which we do in fact act upon or carry into effect.[1] (Italics mine.)

Thus the ideas of the mind are the forms in which the environments of the past and the future, not currently there as a present environment, are present to the individual in his thought. Any object, physical or social, future or past, may exist as an idea in the mind of the reflexive or thinking individual. The character of this "existence" is, behaviorally understood, simply that the responses which the objects did call out or will in the future call out are physiologically present in the central nervous system of the individual in an inhibited state.[2] This state of inhibition is all-important, for it is within the situation created by the stoppage of the act in progress that deliberation and selection may take place. Intelligent conduct consists in the process of organizing, implicitly testing, and finally selecting behavioral responses to situations involving conflict. Such deliberate conduct is impossible if responses to objects are immediate. Only where responses are delayed--where they may be combined and tested in the form of ideas--can behavior be intelligently determined. The significant symbols of language, appearing in the operations of the mind as ideas, and the capacity of the central nervous system to inhibit responses, combine to enable human beings to order their conduct in this fashion.[3]

A word concerning the relationships of ideas and reality is

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[1] MSS, p. 99. [2] PA, p. 70. [3] MSS, pp. 98-99, 254n7.

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perhaps pertinent at this point. It is traditionally assumed that ideas are some kind of "mental stuff," and their relationship to the actual world has accordingly been questioned from time to time. Mead, however, denies that ideas are substantially different in character from the objects which they represent.[1] It is a relativistic universe for Mead, and this assumption carries with it the situational or perspectival character of all objects and groups of objects. This means that no object has a substantial identity or existence in abstraction from its perceptual apprehension. Therefore the idea of a thing which one has in his mind is not different from the "thing itself" simply because it is in a brain and is not independent of the individual. Consciousness, as we have seen, is not located in the brain, but is rather a field of conduct encompassing both the organism and the environment.[2] The only difference between ideas and the environing world, Mead says, is the fact that the ideas of things are accessible only to the individual himself, while the world is accessible to common perception.[3] But a difference in accessibility does not constitute a difference in the fundamental identity of the thing in question, and Mead is ultimately untroubled by the supposed difficulty of equating ideas and things. The idea arises as a possible consummation of an act, and when the act is consummated the idea does in fact become a part of the environing world. As an instance of emergence this is certainly an event involving discontinuities. But there are continuities involved as well, and Mead

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[1] PA, p. 377. [2] See above, p. 50. [3] PA, p. 377.

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finds nothing but difficulty in those world views which ignore these continuities in favor of the supposed mystery of the discontinuity.

Returning to the theme of the operations of the thought process, it should be noted that thinking is not an activity that is automatically characteristic of human experience. When the act in progress proceeds to its consummation in a simple and unimpeded fashion, there is no occasion for the process of mental deliberation. The mind swings into action only when the responses of the individual in carrying out his act are inhibited in some fashion. Such inhibition may occur when the environment offers a plurality of conflicting alternative completions for the act in progress, or when the environment appears to contain no means at all which would be sufficient to attain the desired end. The act of thought is the response to this kind of problematic situation. Thought, for Mead, is a problem-solving activity through and through. It consists entirely of the location of problems and of planning their solutions.[1] The topic of thought, in other words, is always some segment of our activity--whether social or individual--which has been brought to a halt.

In this pragmatic vein, Mead writes, "Thinking is an elaborate process of . . . . presenting the world so that it will be favorable for conduct, so that the ends of the life of the form may be reached."[2] There is a nuance in this statement that deserves close attention, for it reflects an omnipresent dimension of Mead's world-view. The thought process is not to be viewed as a process of becoming aware of a world that is already there.[1] On the contrary, thought is an activity that is creative of a world that has not yet been. Thinking transforms the world of the past. It changes it from a world in which the act in question was impossible of completion into a world in which that same act is completed. Thought does not take place inside someone's head in total isolation from the environing world of social and physical objects. Thought, as has been emphasized, is a field of conduct which cannot simply be located either in the organism or in the environment. The changes effected by thought are apparent in both. The result of the thought process is an emergent world, a new reality in which the previously impossible has become established fact. If, therefore, the occasion of thought is the emergence of a problem, the purpose and the result of thought is the reconstruction of reality.[2]

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[1] SW, pp. 271, 331; PA, p. 539; MSS, p. 367. [2] MSS, p. 93n22.

It will be recalled that reality for Mead is a pluralistic concept. The relativistic character of the universe means that reality considered as a whole is actually a sum of an indefinite number of individual perspectives, each of which represents a particular selective stratification of the world from a particular point of view. Each of these perspectives, and therefore reality considered as a whole, undergoes constant reconstruction to the extent that the acts of the life forms to whom these perspectives belong are characterized by emergence. Such reconstruction is usually minimal when the acts of unminded life forms are considered, so minimal that it may defy perception. But the situation is quite the opposite when minded life forms are considered.

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[1] SW, p. 271. [2] PP, pp. 3-4; MSS, p. 123.

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The linguistic character of mental activity provides the means by which an individual may occupy a plurality of perspectives at once. By linguistically occupying the roles of others he is able to see reality from other standpoints. This gives him both a clearer picture of his own reality and a comprehensive view of realities which transcend his own. The mind, in other words, is the supremely social life-function because of its linguistic structure. When an individual thinks, he has a plurality of perspectives from which to select stimuli. He has a picture of the ways in which these perspectives are organized--the manner in which they are mutually determinative and interrelated. In projecting various reconstructions of reality which he hopes may free his conduct for its consummation, he stands simultaneously in the old reality which is passing away and in the new reality which is emerging in response to his thought.[1] From this standpoint he has an awareness of the meanings of the past and their systematic relationships, the emerging meanings of the future and their systematic relationships, and the relationships of continuity and discontinuity between these two structures of meanings. By delaying his responses to the meanings he calls forth in thought, he is able to test out his hypothetical reality reconstructions before finally choosing a particular plan. The reality emerging from this kind of selective activity may be noticeably different from the reality out of which it proceeds. The emergence of the Einsteinian world view is an example of such reconstruction.

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[1] PA, pp. 608-609. For material concerning the problem of the organization of perspectives and the character of mind as the locus of emergence, see above, ch. 1, pp. 110-111, 145-150.

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It is thus the social character of the mind, its self-transcendence and temporal transcendence in the roles or perspectives of others by means of the significant symbols of language, that makes the mind such an effective tool for the reconstruction of reality. The mind, says Mead, represents the culmination of the phenomenon of sociality--and sociality is both the principle and the form of emergence.[1] The social structure of the mind is the shape of the reality of the present, and as such it is the scene of the emergent events which mark the leading or temporal edge of reality as a social process.[2] "The mind," Mead writes, "is a part of a creative process which is responsible for the world itself."[3] That which has itself emerged out of the world process has become the chief instrument of the creative advance of that process.

The clear implication of the place of mental activity in the evolving world process is that responsibility for the character of worlds which still lie in the future rests upon the kind of intelligence exercised in their conduct by those life forms which have the capacity to think. Mead is keenly aware of this implication. It is important to analyze the dynamics of the world process and to note how reality undergoes continual reconstruction, but it is perhaps even more important to analyze the type of reconstruction which takes place, and to suggest means by which reconstruction can be creative and conservative of value, rather than destructive of value. That is to say, Mead is very much interested in the subject of control. The thinking individual has the possibility of controlling, at least to a degree, the shape of the new realities which shall emerge in response to his activity. The function of reason, according to Mead, is to exercise control over one's conduct, and thereby over reality itself. Or in his own words, "The most important activity of mind that can be identified in behavior is that of adjusting conflicting impulses that they can express themselves harmoniously."[1] The heart of the problem of control lies in the process of making this adjustment.

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[1] PP, p. 85. [2] PP, p. 90.

[3] MT, p. 308. See also SW, p. 316; PP, p. 172.

This is not an easy adjustment to make. In so far as the environment is meaningful to a given life form, a number of organized and highly habitual responses to impulse-answering stimuli have been firmly established in the conduct of this form.[2] These stimulus-response connections or meanings represent in man what Mead terms the "biologic individual." Control over one's environment lies in the ability of mind to secure a type of conduct overlaying that of the biologic individual which will "dissociate" various elements of these organized responses.[3] By "dissociation" Mead is not referring to any kind of inner dismemberment of motor neural connections. He refers instead to the ability of the minded organism to stand off from itself in the role of another or of a generalized other, and from this standpoint to shift his attention to other structures of meaning. Mead expresses the matter this way:

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[1] MSS, p. 367.

[2] The term "meaning" is here used in its general or non-significant sense.

[3] MSS, p. 368.

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> Control over impulses lies only in the shift of attention which brings other objects into the field of stimulation, setting free other impulses, or in such a resetting of the objects that the impulses express themselves on a different time schedule or with additions and subtractions.[1]

The activity of the mind, bringing to the situation the responses and perspectives of others, results in the coming into play of new impulses and tendencies to act which, prior to the act of thought, were not a part of the act in progress. Control over one's environment resides in this ability to expand one's possibilities by directing attention to impulses and stimuli which are made a part of the situation by the reflexive working of the mind. Out of such mental activity emerge the new objects which mediate the impulses to act which have been dissociated from the older objects which could not bring the inhibited act to its consummation.[2]

It should be made unequivocally clear that control over meanings and therefore over the objects of the environment belongs exclusively to those organisms which have mastered the use of language.[3] It is the interchange of roles which takes place in the use of language, whether in conversation or in thought, that places reality at the disposal of the individual. The individual is gifted with the meanings and significant symbols of language by others. It is their organized social experience which he has internalized within himself that enables him to control his surroundings. This world comes to him as a gift from others as he develops in a social community. This is to say that the exercise of control over the environment is fundamentally and

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[1] __MSS__, p. 367. [2] __SW__, p. 15. [3] __MSS__, pp. 132-133, 210.

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inescapably a social phenomenon. This is why Mead, when dealing with the subject of controlling the emerging reality of the universe, usually speaks of "social control."

Mead describes "social control" in the following manner:

> Social control is the expression of the "me" over against the expression of the "I." It sets the limits, it gives the determination that enables the "I," so to speak, to use the "me" as the means of carrying out what is the undertaking that all are interested in.[1]

The "me" may be understood as the self in the eyes of the community, the self as it seems to the individual when he is in the roles of the others which he has internalized in language. Functionally viewed, the "me" is the reality of the present. This reality represents the new materials of thought or the instruments of social control over the environment. It is given to the individual in an organized form as he learns his language, for language is the cooperative social process internalized through symbols. Present reality is thus the perspective of the community, of the social other, or as Mead frequently states, of the "generalized other." The individual's thought, and therefore his control over his environment, begins with the generalized other internalized within his organism and appearing as that aspect of the self which Mead identifies as the "me." Thus Mead says concerning the subject of social control:

> It is in the form of the generalized other that the social process influences the behavior of the individuals involved in it and carrying it on, i.e., that the community exercises control over the conduct of its individual members; for it is

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[1] MSS, p. 210.

> in this form that the social process or community enters as a determining factor into the individual's thinking.[1]

The notion of an isolated individual singlehandedly changing the course of reality is from this point of view sheer nonsense. Einstein, for example, was not alone in his calculations. Functionally present to him in his mind was the organized experience of the entire human community which preceded him, formed him, and continued to surround him. His contribution to reality was a social one.

This is not to suggest that there is no individual dimension in being Alfred Einstein which transcends the reality perspectives comprising his social dimension. This individual dimension, which Mead designates as the "I," is the dynamic source of the emergent reality configurations which characterize the intelligent activities of minded organisms. It is a component of the self which is every bit as important as the social component.

Mead emphasizes, however, the fact that both the magnitude of emergent change generated by the individual and the manner in which such changes fit in with other aspects of reality are functions of the breadth of the social process which the individual has been able to internalize within himself. Most of the activities of the human individual may be classified as social or cooperative acts. In such acts the individual finds himself playing but one role in a cooperative venture requiring the organized participation of other individuals like himself, all of whom share with him a common tendency to achieve the consummation of the social act.[2] Economic systems, governmental

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[1] MSS, p. 155.

[2] SW, pp. 279-282.

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systems, traffic regulations, etc., are examples of cooperative social activities. Social control in these social patterns of human existence depends upon the degree to which the individual is able to assume the attitude of the others in the group with whom he is implicated in the social act.[1] If the individual is unable or unwilling to assume this attitude, his emergent contributions to the social process will be irrelevant or even destructive. If Einstein's theories, for example, failed to account for the body of knowledge previously collected by the scientific community, his contribution would have been without positive value. It was because he was able to comprehend that knowledge and more that his individual contribution became so important. The point is that the phenomenon of social control is actually the dynamic which makes individuality both possible and important. As Mead puts it:

> Hence social control, so far from tending to crush out the human individual or to obliterate his self-conscious individuality, is, on the contrary, actually constitutive of and inextricably associated with that individuality; for the individual is what he is, as a conscious and individual personality, just in so far as he is a member of society, involved in the social process of experience and activity, and thereby socially controlled in his conduct.[2]

The problem of controlling the course of emerging reality is thus, in Mead's eyes, a social problem. The type of control exercised will always be social control. The only variable would seem to be the dimensions of the social group that is reflected in the thought of individual men. The modern world is composed of countless numbers of social groups and institutions. An individual may generalize himself in terms of many of these, or in terms of just a few. His vision, his thought, and his activity will be just as broad or as narrow as his internalization

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[1] *SW*, pp. 290-291.

[2] *MSS*, p. 255.

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of the social process is comprehensive or restrictive.[1] The future of reality depends, in other words, upon the dimensions of the generalized other with which individuals converse in the inner dialogue which is their thought. In this vein Mead writes:

> As long as the complexities of human society do not exceed those of the central nervous system, the problem of an adequate social object, which is identical with that of an adequate self-consciousness, is not that of becoming acquainted with the indefinite number of acts that are involved in social behavior, but that of so overcoming the distances in space and time, and the barriers of language and convention and social status, that we can converse with ourselves in the roles of those who are involved with us in the common undertakings of life. . . . We must be others if we are to be ourselves.[2]

The barriers represent internalizations of the social process which are but fragments of the whole, and the result is fragmented individuals and a social fabric that is riddled with disorganization, confusion, and destructive conflict. Mead's alternative--and one senses a dimension of theological urgency at this point--is the formation of selves and social objects which are comprehensive of the social process as a whole, of the other in its widest generalization. Only then will the potential of the mind to reconstruct reality so that man's impulses may secure harmonious expression be realized.

To summarize, then, man is truly to be regarded as *Homo Sapiens*. That he is *Homo Sapiens* gives him a position both of great power and great responsibility in the continuing evolution of the world-process. But man is only *Homo Sapiens* because, at a more fundamental level, he is *Homo Loquens*. As *Homo Loquens* he has internalized a vast social process in the form of significant symbols. He has

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[1] *SW*, p. 292.   [2] *SW*, p. 292.

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transcended himself in the role of others, and it is from that standpoint that he has become Homo Sapiens. Homo Sapiens presupposes Homo Loquens, and both presuppose a concrete process of social interaction which has been internalized through role-taking.

The Generalized Other and the Structure of the Self

Much of the material that is included in this section has already been presented in earlier portions of this chapter. The purpose of re-presenting this material is to put it into a more summary form so that the relationship between the self and the generalized other can be clearly seen.

Mead's basic characterization of the self refers to its reflexive character. "The self has as its most fundamental character that of being an object to itself," he writes.[1] This takes place in the social conduct of the individual when he experiences himself as a social object.[2] To experience oneself as a social object is to take the attitudes of others towards oneself, and to organize one's own activities on the basis of the tendencies of others to respond to these acts.[3] There is no experience of being a self apart from these social relations to others.[4] "It is only by taking the roles of others," Mead writes, "that we have been able to come back to ourselves."[5] When the individual takes the role of others, he himself emerges as an object in his experience--the object of the other whose role he is taking. In this way he becomes a self rather than simply an individual form of life.

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[1] PA, p. 445. See also MSS, p. 136.

[2] SW, p. 243.

[3] SW, pp. 283-284.

[4] MSS, p. 172.

[5] SW, p. 284.

Being a self involves individuality, but the reflexive character of selfhood totally transcends mere individuality. Being a self brings the social process as a whole within the experience of the individual form, and brings the individual form outside of itself. Mead summarizes:

> In the experience in which the self appears, the individual finds himself acting as another with reference to himself. He becomes, to use the expression already employed, a generalized other, and finds in his experience a group attitude that then enables him to become an object to himself. This expresses what is implied in the etymology of "consciousness" as "an experience with."[1]

Selfhood is a transcending or reflexive relationship within the individual organism, a relationship that is both made possible by social relationships with others and sustained by these relationships.

Special notice should be taken of Mead's emphasis upon the reflexive character of selfhood. The concept of the self in much of current thought is more inclusive in scope than it is in Mead's usage. Selfhood is commonly assumed to include the affective dimensions of human existence, as well as the phenomenon of "unconscious" or "subconscious" motivation. But Mead specifically excludes these kinds of experiences from being considered as a part of the self.[2] He says, for example:

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[1] PA, pp. 411-412.

[2] MSS, pp. 135-138, 173. This suggests neither that Mead is unaware of the importance of these aspects of human existence, nor that Mead's concept of the self is incompatible with the body of knowledge relating to them. The point is simply that Mead's terminology is more restrictive than that employed in current usage, and that to ignore this fact is to run the risk of misinterpreting him. There appears to be no reason why Mead's work could not be amplified so as to deal more fully with the affective and the unconscious, but such a project lies beyond the scope of this dissertation. Given his restricted concept of the self, however, another term such as "personality" or "character" would have to be employed as a correlative to the term "self" in the more common usages of the term.

> Emphasis should be laid on the central position of thinking when considering the nature of the self. Self-consciousness, rather than affective experience with its motor accomplishments, provides the core and primary structure of the self, which is thus essentially a cognitive rather than an emotional phenomenon. The thinking or intellectual process--the internalization and inner dramatization, by the individual, of the external conversation of significant gestures which constitutes his chief mode of interaction with other individuals belonging to the same society--is the earliest experiential phase in the genesis and development of the self.[1]

The implied separation of the cognitive and the emotional may of course be questioned, but it would also be somewhat beside the point. The point is that Mead finds an adequate explanation for the growth and development of the experience of selfhood only in the process of internalizing the social process in the form of linguistic symbols by means of which the individual may stand outside himself and thus experience himself. That the individual has other kinds of experiences, or rather, that the conduct of the individual exhibits other kinds of dynamics than the cognitive, is not denied.

This rather clearly implies that human individuals do in fact exhibit various types of behavior which do not involve these individuals as selves. Mead does not shrink from this implication. A non-significant conversation of gestures, for example, does not involve the organization of experience into selfhood.[2] Nor is there an experience of the self in that type of behavior which falls into the category of the habitual. As Mead says at one point:

> The intelligence of the lower forms of animal life, like a great deal of human intelligence, does not involve a self. In our

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[1] MSS, p. 173. [2] MSS, p. 175.

> habitual actions, for example, in our moving about in a world that is simply there and to which we are so adjusted that no thinking is involved, there is a certain amount of sensuous experience such as persons have when they are just waking up, a bare thereness of the world. Such characters about us may exist in experience without taking their place in relationship to the self. One must, of course, under these conditions, distinguish between the experience that immediately takes place and our own organization of it into the experience of the self . . . . the self is not necessarily involved in the life of the organism, nor involved in what we term our sensuous experience, that is, experience in a world about us for which we have habitual reactions.[1]

It is when the individual's organized patterns of habitual actions are thrown into disarray--when he is confronted by a problem of some sort--that the individual experiences himself as a self.[2] At such times the individual is called upon to rearrange the meaningful patterns of his world so that he can continue to function in it. In most forms of life this rearrangement takes place by trial and error, but in the human individual the self comes into being. The problem is solved by manipulation of various meanings which the self has within itself by means of taking the roles of others through language. Until the individual takes the role of another, and this is a cognitive phenomenon in Mead's usage, there is no experience of selfhood.

The experience of being a self is not a direct experience. Nor is it an individual experience. As Mead summarizes it:

> The individual experiences himself as such, not directly, but only indirectly, from the particular standpoints of other individual members of the same social group, or from the generalized standpoint of the social group as a whole to which he belongs. For he enters his own experience as a self or individual, not directly or immediately, not by becoming a subject to himself,

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[1] MSS, pp. 135-136. [2] SW, p. 147.

> but only in so far as he first becomes an object to himself just as other individuals are objects to him or in his experience; and he becomes an object to himself only by taking the attitudes of other individuals toward himself within a social environment or context of experience and behavior in which both he and they are involved.[1]

Thus the acting individual, the so-called subject of experience, is not really a self. It is only when the subject of experience becomes an object to itself that the experience becomes one of selfhood, and this occurs only when the subject of experience is outside itself in the role of another, i.e., it occurs cognitively.

The human individual, then, is a composite being. In part he is a socially self-conscious individual or self, and in part he is simply an individual who reacts to his environment on the basis of impulses shared with the rest of the members of the animal kingdom. Mead's term for this latter dimension of human existence is "the biologic individual."[2] The conduct of the biologic individual, as contrasted to that of the self-conscious individual, is marked by immediacy of experience and lack of control through self-transcendence.[3] "The term refers," Mead writes, "to the individual in an attitude and at a moment in which the impulses sustain an unfractured relation with the objects around him."[4] The self-conscious individual comes into being when, in the course of the life process, this unfractured relation with the world is succeeded by a set of conditions in which part of the world is out of place--in which the relationship becomes fractured. At this point the biologic individual who is the subject of his activity becomes the self-conscious individual who, in addition to being the subject of his activity, is the object of the activity of others and thus an object to himself in the role of these others. The conduct of the self-conscious individual is marked by the very elements of purpose, self-transcendence, and control which are missing in the impulsive conduct of the biologic individual. This is not to suggest that human existence is a schizophrenic affair, played out now on the biologic level and now on the cognitive level. It is rather to note that human activity is a complex undertaking that reveals varied sources of motivating and intermediary dynamics. As Mead puts it:

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[1] MSS, p. 138.

[2] Mead provides a "rough" list of ten fundamental animal impulses which comprise the biologic individual. These include physical adjustments to other objects, reactions to danger and extreme conditions, physiological drives such as sex and hunger, and care of the young. See MSS, pp. 348-349.

[3] MSS, pp. 347-353.

[4] MSS, p. 352.

> While these types of conduct can be clearly distinguished from each other in human behavior, they are not on separate planes, but play back and forth into each other, and constitute, under most conditions, an experience which appears to be cut by no lines of cleavage.[1]

The self's experience, in other words, is of a unitive rather than disjunctive character.

The task is now one of analyzing more carefully the nature of this interplay of biologic and self-conscious behavior, and of determining how it is that the self's experience of its behavior is one of unity. This will involve an exposition of the dialogic character of the self--of what Mead calls the "conversation of the 'I' and the 'me.'"[2]

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[1] MSS, p. 347. [2] MSS, pp. 173-179 et passim.

The self is constituted by this conversation of the "I" and the "me," which is the equivalent of saying that selfhood emerges out of the interaction of the biologic individual and the social process or generalized other.

The act of any individual living organism may be thought of as a "subjective" act. It is the act of that individual alone. It is a subjective act even though it may be a component of a larger social act, in that, within the context of the broader social act, the individual still behaves according to his own role. When the social process begins to take on significance, however--when various meanings are shared by a number of the individuals involved in it--a new situation emerges. The added dimension of this new situation is that the acting individual no longer plays out only his own subjective role in the process, but he also plays out the roles of others as well in the inhibited activity which is his thought.

From a purely external point of view nothing has changed. Individuals are still the subjects of their behavior, and they may be observed acting in some particular manner. But from a more analytic point of view, these individuals are objects of their own activity as well as subjects of it. They respond to their own stimuli in the role of others in the community to which they belong. It is this dynamic that results in the experience of being a self. One looks at oneself through the eyes of others, so that it must be said of every linguistic or cognitive act that the acting individual is both subject of his act and object to himself in his acting. To the extent that the acting individual plans his activity he does so by responding to his own stimuli with the responses of others so that he will know how further to respond. In thought, in other words, the individual passes back and forth between the roles of himself and of the other, of subject and object. This functional alternation between self and other is the dynamic which lies behind Mead's distinction between the "I" and the "me."

The "I" and the "me" are phases of the self's linguistic activity. They are distinguishable from one another, yet neither is conceivable apart from the other where conduct involving selfhood is considered. Neither has an existence in and of itself, but each plays a particular part in the unfolding of an "intelligent" human act. Their only reality as separable entities lies within the process of activity.

The "me" is the self in those phases of its activity in which it responds to its own stimuli in the role of the generalized other. "The 'me' is a man's reply to his own talk," Mead writes.[1] The content of this reply is the attitude of the generalized other toward the individual in question--the way the community at large responds to the individual, thus giving him his place among its membership. The "me" is thus the social process which the individual has internalized in an organized form. The "me" is, "the organized set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes."[2] The "me" is in the objective case, as it is the object of the conduct of others; and it is in addition,

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[1] SW, p. 140. [2] MSS, p. 175.

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through the dynamics of role-taking, the object of the individual's own self-experience. The self one is aware "of" is always the socially derived "me."[1]

This self is by its very process of coming into being a very habitual and conventional individual.[2] The self in its "me" phase has the same habits, values, and responses which everyone else in the group has. It must have them in order to be a functioning member of the community which has given it birth. As Mead puts it at one point:

> The "me" is essentially a member of a social group, and represents, therefore, the value of the group, that sort of experience which the group makes possible. Its values are the values that belong to society. In a sense these values are supreme. They are values which under certain extreme moral and religious conditions call out the sacrifice of the self for the whole. Without this structure of things, the life of the self would become impossible.[3]

The "me," in other words, gives the self its placement in the social process. It is the reflection of what is going on in the individual's environment, of how that individual fits into the rest of the group.

Without this socially derived self-concept an individual will find it impossible to interact with the group in a meaningful fashion. He will literally not know what to do. It is in this sense that Mead speaks of the "me" as the "form" or "structure" of the self.[4] As an objective reflection of the social process in which the individual is implicated, the "me" represents the social situation in which the further conduct of the self may take place.[5] The predictable responses of the community to his actions--and these represent the individual's sole means of significant communication with and in the community--are reflected in his thought, and become the means whereby he as an individual may make a reciprocal contribution to the community as a whole. The "me" is not the whole of the self, but without an adequate self-concept or "me" an individual is relatively powerless to assert his own individuality or "I" upon the social process.

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[1] MSS, p. 175; SW, p. 142. [2] MSS, p. 197.

[3] MSS, p. 214. [4] MSS, p. 215. [5] MSS, pp. 277, 279.

The "I" is the individual counterpart of the socially derived "me." It is the biologic individual which exercises the "subjective" dimension of the activity of the self. Its "object" is the self in its social dimension--the self as adjusted to its social environment by the internalization of that environment as an objective "me."[1] In its "me" phase the structure of the self is the assumption of an organized set of the attitudes of others. In its "I" phase, however, the character of the self is that of a response to these attitudes.[2] The relationship of the "I" to the "me" is thus that of the individual organism to its situation or placement in the world.[3] The activity of the self emerges through a process of the "I" interacting with the "me," a process which may properly be termed "dialogic" in character.

Unlike the socially determined "me" which represents the individual's entire experience of himself, the "I" is not an object of the individual's own experience.[4] As Mead writes:

> . . . such an "I" is a presupposition, but never a presentation of conscious experience, for the moment it is presented it has passed into the objective case, presuming, if you like, an "I"

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[1] MSS, p. 371.

[2] MSS, pp. 175, 196, 277.

[3] MSS, pp. 277, 280.

[4] SW, pp. 140-141.

> that observes--but an "I" that can disclose himself only by ceasing to be the subject for whom the object "me" exists. . . . the subject attitude which we instinctively take can be presented only as something experienced--as we can be conscious of our acts only through the sensory processes set up after the act has begun.[1] (Italics mine.)

The "I" is the actor, in other words, and the actor is only aware of what he has done after he has done it.[2] And when the act is done, reflection upon the actor is reflection upon a past event rather than upon something that is going on at that precise moment. Thus it is that the "I" is an object of experience only when it has slipped into the past and is presented as a "me," as an historical figure.[3] Even the so-called "observer" of self-conscious experience is in fact a response in the role of others to one's own conduct. It is a "me" which judges what the "I" has done--a "me" which presupposes an "I" but nevertheless an objectively given "me" such as is experienced in all reflective conduct.[4]

Not only does the "I" phase of the self lie beyond direct conscious experience, it also lies beyond the realm of predictable behavior. The "I," that is, is the ultimate birthplace of emergence in human activity.[1] As contrasted to the predictable, conventional, structured, and externally imposed character of the "me," the response of the "I" to the "me" is characterized by uncertainty, novelty, freedom, and the force of individual initiative.[2] The function of the "I" is the formation of hypotheses, hypotheses which break the bonds of the present and usher in new worlds in which what was formerly impossible becomes the new commonplace.[3] The possibilities of the future belong to the "I." Mead says of these possibilities:

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[1] SW, pp. 142-143.

[2] Mead's position is that there is no direct experience of motor or active processes, but only sensation of acts which have been completed. This excludes from the experience of selfhood any direct experience of what one is doing at the exact moment he is doing it. However, one may presume that experience of partial acts which are phases of larger acts is not excluded. This may explain the fact that we often seem to know what we are doing. Mead's point would be that, while we have a plan in mind, we watch it unfold only in phases which, strictly speaking, are completed and belong to the past. See MSS, pp. 23, 27, 94, 138, 225.

[3] MSS, p. 174.

[4] SW, pp. 144-145.

> We do not know just what they are. . . . The possibilities of the "I" belong to that which is actually going on, taking place, and it [sic] is in some sense the most fascinating part of our experience. It is there that novelty arises and it is there that our most important values are located. It is the realization in some sense of the self that we are seeking.[4]

Reality itself awaits the response of the "I," in which resides that "logical" determination belonging to the future which unites with the "causal" determination of the past to form the character of the real in a relative and evolving universe.

It is a mistake to overemphasize the contrast between the socially imposed, conventional "me" and the individually creative and innovative "I." The contrast is there, and it is of tremendous importance, but one must always bear in mind that when Mead speaks of the "I" and the "me" he is speaking only of distinguishable phases of the total act of a single unified self. Mead puts it this way:

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[1] See above, "Emergence and the Individual," ch. 1, pp. 102-104. The dimension of individuality which Mead extols is the self in its "I" dimension.

[2] MSS, pp. 175-177, 197. [3] SW, pp. 52-54. [4] MSS, p. 204.

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> The "me" and the "I" lie in the process of thinking and they indicate the give-and-take which characterizes it. There would not be an "I" in the sense in which we use that term if there were not a "me"; there could not be a "me" without a response in the form of the "I." These two, as they appear in our experience, constitute the personality.[1]

The unity of the self or personality is lodged in the completion of the act.[2] The self comes into being when its habitual patterns of action are inhibited by the appearance of a problem which renders the environment inhospitable to conduct. This situation is internalized as a "me." The acting individual organism, by means of the "me," finds the situation intelligible and responds to it as an "I" in such a manner that it is reorganized so that conduct may proceed. It is true that, speaking functionally, throughout the process of this cognitive act the "I" represents the goal of the act, and thus in some sense the very act itself.[3] But the "I" cannot achieve its goal apart from the "me," just as the "me" remains in the situation of frustrated conduct apart from the "I."

What actually occurs in the dialogue of the "I" and the "me" is that the two phases or aspects of the self are "fused."[4] This fusion may be understood as the manner in which the means of completing the act, or the "me," expresses the end of the act, or the "I."[5] Fusion characterizes every cognitive act which goes through to its consummation. As the act unfolds, the "I" and the "me" coalesce. Some situations are, of course, more favorable as vehicles for the self-expression of the "I" than others, but in every situation there is some way for the "I"

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[1] MSS, p. 182. [2] MSS, p. 203. [3] MSS, p. 203.

[4] MSS, pp. 273-281. [5] MSS, pp. 280-281.

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to impress its emergent values on the social scene as a whole.[1] The outcome of every successful dialogue of "I" and "me" is a unified self in which the "I" and the "me" are fused into one. The situation has changed, so that what the "I" has been seeking in the act has become a social reality, and is now the "me" which the self internalizes. The form of society and the goal of the act become one structure, in which the new "me" stimulates the "I" to do what it is already doing.

Mead points out that in certain rare instances--such as situations in which the attitudes of religion, patriotism, or teamwork, prevail--one's activity may already be fused with that of the community, i.e., one's "I" may be stimulated by his "me" to act as he is already acting.[2] This represents in a way the goal of human existence. In most cases, however, it is but a fleeting accomplishment, and the normal relationship of the "I" and the "me" is one of creative tension.

The discussion of the dynamics of the dialogue of "I" and "me" which constitutes the character of the self serves to demonstrate what may be designated the "processive" or "eventful" character of the self. That is to say, self-identity is a matter that is situationally determined--just as the identity of any other object in a relativistic universe is situationally determined. The self is a social object, and it undergoes reconstruction like all social objects.[3] As Mead puts it:

> The self is not something that exists first and then enters into relationship with others, but it is, so to speak, an eddy in the social current and so still a part of the current. It is a

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[1] MSS, pp. 209-212. [2] MSS, pp. 273-281.

[3] PA, p. 155.

> process in which the individual is continually adjusting himself in advance to the situation to which he belongs, and reacting back on it. So [sic] that the "I" and the "me," this thinking, this conscious adjustment, becomes then a part of the whole social process and makes a much more highly organized society possible.[1] (Italics mine.)

An eddy is a place where a current of water momentarily doubles back upon itself. It is not removed from the passage of the water, but is simply an event through which the water moves while pursuing its ongoing course. This is an extremely apt model for the human self. The self is not an entity in and of itself. It is always an entity that is created out of what is going on at any given time. To the extent that one experiences himself as an entity with a stable identity, he is experiencing a chain of events which exhibit certain dimensions of continuity along a definite historical route of passage. But one also experiences growth and change in oneself, and to the extent that this takes place one is experiencing the effects of change in the social process, change which may even reflect the creative contribution of one's own "I" to that ongoing process.

Growth and change are readily accepted as marks of the developmental period of human life. Mead's point, however, is that growth and change characterize the self in any period of its history.[2] The life of the self is always a progression of events. In each of these events the character of the self is somewhat different. A situation arises which disrupts the organism's patterned activity. At this point a self comes into being. In its being it reflects a certain continuity with its past--matters such as racial and national heritage, family relations, educational background, peer group relations, etc. But it also reflects a certain discontinuity, for in the process of solving the problem at hand the self makes a novel contribution to what is going on and thereby becomes a new self. The Ph.D. candidate, for example, is a different self from the one he will become when the degree is conferred. The astronaut is a new self when he has walked upon another planetary body. What one does changes things, and this change is reflected in who one is. Being is fundamentally a matter of becoming.

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[1] MSS, p. 182.

[2] MSS, p. 135.

Selfhood, then, reflects the ongoing social process. This process is present to the self in memory images from the past, and in present tendencies to respond which will be creative of a novel future. When the self marshalls these resources into a successful consummation of the act, it has become an entity with a different character, however great or slight the difference may be. With the accomplishment of its goal, or in other terms, when the self has become what it is to be in a given situation, it passes out of existence as a present reality. With the completion of the act that called it into being, the self is a completed event. It is called into existence again in subsequent events, to be sure, but there again its existence is only for the duration of the cognitive act. Between acts, Mead says, "the self is reduced to the effort of conduct and to the point of spatial and temporal departure for the next act."[1] Circumstances will decide

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[1] PA, p. 384.

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how closely succeeding selves will resemble one another. Each such self has a common background, but filling out an income tax form calls forth a different past than dealing with an hysterical child. To repeat, according to Mead's view what one is at a given moment is a function of what one is doing.

If this is the case, then the question of the unity of the self is not exhausted by the discussion of the fusion of the "I" and the "me" at the completion of the act. That discussion accounts for the unity of the self which is becoming in a given event, but it does not account for the complex of events in which the self is involved in the normal course of living. It is perhaps with this factor in mind that Mead speaks of a distinction between "the complete self" and "the elementary selves of which it is composed."[1]

This distinction corresponds to the distinction between the entire social process in which the individual is implicated and various particular aspects or sub-processes of the more generic process. The other in terms of which the individual generalizes himself is of indeterminate dimensions. A given individual is implicated in the social process as a whole in a number of ways. He is, for example, a business man, a church member, a graduate of various educational institutions, a resident of a particular neighborhood, a Democrat, a husband, a father, a sports fan, and a number of other things. His "complete" self, according to Mead, reflects each of these factors as they have achieved some unity and structure in the social process

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[1] MSS, p. 144.

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considered as a whole. But within this total structure his activities often reflect his implication in only a few aspects of the total structure, and in this sense Mead suggests that there is an elementary selfhood corresponding to each such aspect.[1]

It is a common phenomenon of experience that an individual exhibits slightly differing selves as he fulfills varying social roles. He may, for various reasons, not even be aware in his activities in one role of the implications for these activities of his placement in some other role in the social process. As Mead puts it, in the context of a comparison of the unity of the self and the unity of the mind:

> The unity of the mind is not identical with the unity of the self. The unity of the self is constituted by the unity of the entire relational pattern of social behavior and experience in which the individual is implicated, and which is reflected in the structure of the self; but many of the aspects or features of this entire pattern do not enter into consciousness, so that the unity of the mind is in a sense an abstraction from the more inclusive unity of the self.[2]

One's genesis and development as a self, in other words, implants certain characteristics in "the" self which may not always express themselves in the specific activity in which the individual is engaged at the moment. The extreme instance of the manifestation of a narrow group reference (and thus a narrow selfhood) to the exclusion of wider referents which are perhaps "there" but dormant, is found in the behavior of an individual who is caught up in the frenzy of a mob.[3]

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[1] MSS, p. 144.

[2] MSS, p. 144n4. The meaning of the term "abstraction" in this quotation refers to a kind of selective narrowing rather than to the selection of generic features.

[3] MSS, pp. 213, 218.

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In such a situation only a partial self is represented, reflecting only a minute portion of the entire relational social process.

The implication of this distinction between the complete self and its partial or component selves is that in most given instances there are dimensions of the self which remain hidden from view in the activities that are going on. As Mead puts it:

> The human individual who possesses a self is always a member of a larger social community, a more extensive social group, than that in which he immediately and directly finds himself or to which he immediately and directly belongs. In other words, the general pattern of social or group behavior which is reflected in the respective organized attitudes--the respective integrated structures of the selves--of the individual involved, always has wider reference, for those individuals, than that of its direct relation to them, namely, a reference beyond itself to a wider social environment or context of social relationships which includes it, and of which it is only a more or less limited part.[1]

Thus it is that one may observe a member of a more or less restrictive social group, such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, reflecting a more universal social frame of reference when she speaks out against racial restrictions in the membership policies of the group. Mead's point is that, whereas this broader reference is recognizable in the woman's own self-attitude and in her observable behavior, the same reference is available to other members of the group as a possible way of being, even though it remains hidden in their current behavior. They, too, are implicated in a more universal social community or generalized other than the one or ones whose attitudes they generally reflect.

The importance of these hidden dimensions of the self cannot be overemphasized, for they represent the means by which the self in its "I" phase may generalize itself in terms of a "me" that is broader than the immediate social context, and thus effect social change. Mead denies that the self is simply bound by the community attitude.[1] Reform of community standards and practices is always a present possibility, but it is so only in terms of a community or generalized other of broader dimensions. Mead says:

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[1] MSS, p. 272.

> The only way in which we can react against the disapproval of the entire community is by setting up a higher sort of community which in a certain sense out-votes the one we find.[2]

He amplifies this point of view by referring to the impact on society of such great individuals as Jesus, Buddha, and Socrates:

> An individual of the type to which we are referring arises always with reference to a form of society or societal order which is implied but not adequately expressed. . . . What has given them their unique importance is that they have taken the attitude of living with reference to a larger society. . . . Such an individual is divergent from the point of view of what we would call the prejudices of the community; but in another sense he expresses the principles of the community more completely than any other.[3]

The forceful individual leader may be said to express the principles of the community more completely than other members of the community because, in his living with reference to a broader social ideal, he is giving concrete expression to a tendency that is already present in the more immediate and narrower society.[4] These "tendencies toward reform" are right there in the common life of the community.

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[1] MSS, p. 168. [2] MSS, pp. 167-168. [3] MSS, p. 217.

[4] This is but one side of the effect a strong leader may have upon the community in which he leads. The other side is the situation in which the leader lives with reference to a narrower society, which leads to social degradation rather than social integration. See MSS, p. 218. Mead emphasizes the possibilities of reform and integration.

Mead locates these tendencies toward reform primarily in the phenomenon of language:

> It is especially in terms of the logical universe of discourse. . . that the individuals belonging to any given social group or community become conscious of this wider social reference of that group or community beyond itself, to the further and larger context of social relations and interactions of human society or civilization as a whole in which, with all other particular human societies or organized social groups, it is implicated.[1]

The "logical universe of discourse" is defined as:

> . . . the general system of universally significant symbols--which all thought or reasoning presupposes as the field of its activity, and which transcends the bounds of different languages and different racial and national customs. . .[2]

Thus defined, the logical universe of discourse may be described as the possibility of significant communication. This possibility cuts across--or might cut across--all of the barriers which separate individuals and the communities in which they find themselves. The logical universe of discourse consists of the highest abstractions, and yet it is a functional dimension of all human communication, and as such it opens the door to the interrelationship of people and groups of people on a much broader scale than has actually been achieved.[3] As long as the use of language characterizes the social process, possibilities exist for social integration and reform.

While the abstracted logical factors which characterize linguistic behavior represent perhaps the most fundamental of the tendencies toward reform which are integral to the social process. Mead sees other dimensions of this process which also lead toward a more

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[1] *MSS*, p. 273n15. [2] *MSS*, pp. 273n15. [3] *MSS*, p. 284.

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inclusive and universal society. Chief among these are the phenomena of universal religions and economic systems.[1] Despite the propagandizing that goes along with the political structure of the universal religions, Mead suggests that: "The processes expressed in the universal religion inevitably carry with them that of the logical community represented by the universe of discourse."[2] Similarly, the economic process provides ends which any life-form that is able to use the same medium of communication can seek and enter into.[3]

This is not, in Mead's eyes, simply a matter of creed or ideology. The abstract social relationships in the religious and economic systems are universal in their working or behavioral character, not because of any philosophical abstractions involved in them.[4] Mead summarizes his point in this fashion.

> The very universality of the processes which belong to human society, whether looked at from the point of view of religion or trading or logical thinking, at least opens the door to a universal society; and, in fact, these tendencies all express themselves where the social development has gone far enough to make it possible.[5]

The universality of which he speaks is of course the "other" in its generalized dimension. This generalized other is both a concrete social reality and also the content of the individual self in its "me" phase. It is both a social reality and a social goal. It is both the fullness of the self and the means by which the self may contribute to the process which has given it birth.

To summarize the relationship between the self and society;

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[1] MSS, p. 281. [2] MSS, p. 282. [3] MSS, p. 281.

[4] MSS, p. 289. [5] MSS, p. 284.

the self comes into being when, through the use of the significant symbols of language, the individual is able to respond to its own actions in the role of or with the attitude of the social process or generalized other. The dimensions of the self are exactly as broad or as narrow as the dimensions of the other which it has been able to internalize. Mead describes this process as follows:

> So the self reaches its full development by organizing these individual attitudes of others into the organized or group attitudes, and by thus becoming an individual reflection of the general systematic pattern of social or group behavior in which it and the others are all involved--a pattern which enters as a whole into the individual's experience in terms of these organized group attitudes which, through the mechanism of his central nervous system, he takes toward himself, just as he takes the individual attitudes of others.[1]

And again:

> That is, the individual comes to realize himself just in so far as he can take the attitude of the group to which he belongs.[2]

The more of the broader social process the individual is able to internalize, the more the structure of the self will reflect integration and unity of purpose. The less of this process one internalizes, the more his self will reflect a lack of integration, and as an individual his behavior will be erratic and non-constructive. The self and society are thus closely interwoven entities, or in Mead's statement: "social reconstruction and self or personality reconstruction are the two sides of a single process--the process of human social evolution."[3]

There is always the individual dimension of the self, the "I" which is unpredictable in the selection of a "me" as a means to its goal, but the possibilities of the "I" are almost totally dependent upon the breadth of experience gathered in by the "me." The ideal state of the human community, in other words, is a full degree both of "functional differentiation" (the "I") and of "social participation" (the "me").[1] Fundamental to this ideal, however, is an organization of common attitudes (a generalized other) which is found in all individuals.[2] Such an ideal is "approached" by the economic society and by the universal religions, but it is fully realized in neither.[3] It remains as a goal to be sought, As an ideal community it functions as a source of social creativity for all those individuals who think and act in terms of it. Its gift to the individual is a fullness of the self, and the individual's gift in return is the actualization of a particular social reality which, prior to the individual's act, was only implied. In this continued process of social interaction, both the self and the generalized other take on emergent dimensions. At no time is the one conceivable apart from the other. They are correlative social emergents.

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[1] __MSS__, p. 158. [2] __MTNC__, p. 415. [3] __MSS__, p. 309.

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[1] MSS, p. 326. [2] MSS, p. 323. [3] MSS, p. 328.

CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPT OF THE GENERALIZED OTHER AS DEVELOPED BY MEAD

Introduction

The contents of this chapter represent a comprehensive analysis of Mead's own thinking concerning the concept of the generalized other. This analysis is strictly limited to the dimensions and implications which Mead himself finds in the notion. Being thus limited, it will be exegetical in character, like the preceding chapters. An effort has been made to include within this exegesis every reference to the generalized other which appears in Mead's literary legacy. Not all of these references will be quoted and analyzed in full, for some are merely repetitive of others. Likewise, some passages dealing with the concept which do not actually use the terminology will also be analyzed. To this extent there will be some selection and interpretation involved in the analysis. But the basic intent is to expose exactly what Mead sees in the concept of the generalized other, no more and no less.

The resulting analysis marks both a consummation and a point of new departure in the course of the development of the dissertation. It represents a kind of summary of Mead's thought, focused around this key concept which is so suggestive from a theological point of view. The point being made is that the theological implications of the generalized other can only be appreciated fully when such a summary of the concept is presented in the complete context of thought which sustains it. Theological implications either prematurely or incompletely drawn are not likely to be of lasting significance. It is therefore deemed necessary to present this exegetical analysis of the generalized other as Mead developed it in the context of his own thought. The completed analysis becomes then a point of departure for development of the concept beyond where Mead took it (chapter four), and the outlining of a theological viewpoint which uses the concept as a controlling category (chapter five).

The Birth of the Generalized Other in Social Activity

The analysis will begin at the point where Mead himself often introduces the concept of the generalized other--with the distinction between the nature of role-taking in simple play and in an organized game:

> The fundamental difference between the game and play is that in the latter the child must have the attitude of all the others involved in that game. The attitudes of the other players which the participant assumes organize into a sort of unit, and it is that organization which controls the response of the individual . . . . What he [the individual] does is controlled by his being everyone else on that team, at least so far as those attitudes affect his own particular response. We then get an "other" which is an organization of the attitudes of those involved in the same process.
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> The organized community or social group which gives to the individual his unity of self may be called "the generalized other." The attitude of the generalized other is the attitude of the whole community.[1]

In simple play the child assumes only one role, other than being itself or an "I," and the activity characterizing such play is dialogic in character. But participation in a game takes the situation beyond the simple dialogic stage. Each participant in a game has an active part in the game. If the game is to succeed, i.e., if the several participants are able to continue their game-playing conduct, the parts of each must fit together in some coordinated fashion. There must be organization if the conduct of the game-playing group is not to be frustrated and brought to a halt. Mead's point about the generalized other is that such organization is possible only if each individual game player has the responses of all the others internalized in his own organism in a coordinated fashion. In his own words:

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[1] _MSS_, pp. 153-154.

> The nature of the game is such that every act in the game is determined and qualified by all the other acts. This is expressed by the rules of the game, and implies in each individual a *generalized player* that is present in every part that is taken.[1] (Italics mine.)

The generalized player is not any particular individual. It is the social process of game-playing internalized in each of the individuals implicated in the game. It is the ordered pattern that has emerged with the game itself. Or in terms of the opening quotation, it is the "attitude" of the general category of players of that game.

An "attitude," in Mead's usage of the term, is an organization of the nervous system prior to the enactment of an act.[2] That which is organized consists of behavioral responses to various stimuli--responses which are physiologically there in the organism in advance of the actual stimulus of physical things, or responses which have been physiologically aroused by things but which still await occasion for their full expression. Attitudes of the former type are "ideas;"

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[1] *PA*, p. 274.

[2] *MSS*, p. 11.

those of the latter type are "meanings."[1] Both ideas and meanings are there in the organism because they have characterized the social process prior to the situation in question. They represent the social process internalized within the individual, usually in the form of language. Their behavioral significance lies in the fact that they enable the individual to know what he is doing prior to being called upon to do it.

To the extent that the process internalized is social in character, attitudes "socialize" all the individuals in whom they are found. That is, having the common responses of a social group within an individual gives that individual the same characteristics as the group at large. As far as the specific behavioral patterns shared in common are concerned, the individual is a kind of microcosm of the whole. Thus it is that each individual baseball player follows the same set of rules as all the others. The class of baseball players represents a social group. This group is composed of a large number of individuals, but in their attitude concerning baseball playing--their willingness to play within an agreed set of limits--each individual stands for the whole. The general or organized responses of the others form the responses of the individual. If this does not occur, the game breaks down into something else.

The generalized other is such an attitude or preconditioned behavioral pattern.[2] It is the attitude which all the others in the social grouping assume in given conditions and over against the same

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[1] _SW_, p. 336. [2] _MSS_, p. 154; _PP_, p. 87; _PA_, p. 445.

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objects.[1] When the individual assumes this attitude he becomes the group in the behavioral sense that his response is identical to the response(s) of any other individual group member or aggregate of members.[2] His role at this point is interchangeable with the role of the whole group as this group role has been refined and organized through the process of social interaction. Reiterating Mead's comments on the game: "What he [the individual] does is controlled by his being everyone else on the team."[3] (Italics mine.)

There is nothing magical about this interchange of roles so long as Mead's behavioral point of view is kept in mind. Reality for Mead is something that happens. From the point of view of what is happening--of actual behavioral responses--the roles of everyone sharing a given common attitude or generalized other are identical. This commonality of response allows the individual to speak to himself and to others with the authority of the group.[4] He does what, through the organization of its experience, the group does.

The same behavioral point of view accounts for the fact of organization in the behavior of the group. The generalization of the other is simply the result of the emergence in the social process of identical behavioral responses.[5] The description of the emergence of language chronicles this occurrence.[6] When such identical responses begin to appear in the social history of the group in question, that group begins to take on well-defined characteristics--a "generalized self," as Mead puts it.[1] The tendency toward this unified structure is provided by the unity of the social activity in which the group is involved.[2] Successful completion of the social act is dependent upon successful organization of the roles of the individual participants in that act. Whenever social conduct is successful--whenever it maintains itself through successive consummations of its goals--one may infer that the participants in the act have been highly socialized. The generalized other is basically this organized social undertaking made reflexively internal to the individual through the significant symbols of language.

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[1] SW, p. 245.

[2] MSS, p. 154.

[3] MSS, p. 154.

[4] SW, p. 245.

[5] SW, p. 245.

[6] See above, chapter two, pp. 170-182.

The attitude of the generalized other is a "universal" attitude.[3] A universal attitude is one that is shared across the board by the individuals comprising a specific social grouping. Words, for example, are universals within a particular language grouping or universe of discourse. A word is universal just for the fact that in his response to it each individual reacts with the common attitude of the others in the language group. That is, the word is universal because it commands from individuals the response of the generalized other.[4] Its universality resided in its functional, behavioral, or working character.[5] Mead suggests that the sole source of universals is the fact that individual selves do actually assume the attitude of the generalized other in their conduct.[6]

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[1] PA, p. 656. [2] PA, p. 656.

[3] PA, p. 432. See above, chapter two, pp. 174-177.

[4] PA, p. 275. [5] MSS, p. 289. [6] SW, p. 245.

The attitude of the generalized other--the universal attitude of the social grouping--is in fact generalized from a number of individual instances. A universal is a single response that may be given to a number of stimuli because that response can be recognized in each of them.[1] It is thus a kind of abstraction or selective emphasis of attentive thought, although it is selected from concrete behavioral events. The generalized other, as a universal, shares this characteristic. Mead describes the process of generalization as follows:

> In social conduct the individual takes the attitudes of another in a cooperative process. If there are a number of persons engaged in the process, he must in some sense take the attitude of all of them. He accomplishes this by getting the attitude which each assumes in relation to the common end which each has. He finds an identical element in the attitude of each, which expresses itself in the different responses of the individuals. It is his ability to go from one of the attitudes to another in so far as each calls out the other that constitutes the structure of the system which imports the group into his experience.[2]

And again:

> The community speaks to the individual with an identical voice, but each speaks from a different standpoint, and yet these standpoints are interrelated within the co-operative social activity, and the individual in assuming the attitude of one finds himself by the character of the response implicated in the responses of the others. In this fashion the individual attains the universality of the community response, which may involve the responses of an indefinite number of individuals, and yet is a universalized attitude which is specifically related to his individual conduct--it lies within his perspective.[3]

The attitude of the generalized other emerges from the specific cooperative social activities of individuals. It emerges as the common dimension of these activities, which is recognized and organized out of all the individual differences which also characterize them.[4]

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[1] MSS, pp. 83-85; SW, p. 291; PA, p. 390. See above, chapter two, p. 174.

[2] PA, pp. 612-613.

[3] PA, p. 153.

[4] PA, p. 375.

This is its character as an abstraction. But even though the generalized other is an abstraction, when the individual takes the role of another who is a member of the group sharing that attitude, he takes that attitude himself in his ensuing activity. Thus the abstraction from concrete behavioral events also has concrete behavioral relevance. Taking the role of the generalized other is the means by which individual members of a social group sustain their common existence within that group. The analysis now moves to a discussion of how this is the case.

The Relevance of the Generalized Other to Human Social Existence

In a word, there is no social order if the individual members of a social grouping of individuals do not share common attitudes with respect to their life activities. Having the attitude of the generalized other--the coordinated pattern appearing in a plurality of individual attitudes--is "essential to the order of society," according to Mead.[1] If such a coordinated attitude does not emerge in the course of social interaction, the result is chaos. Communication in the significant, human sense of the term depends upon the sharing of meanings--upon having a generalized attitude or behavioral response to a given stimulus in common. When meanings are shared, they become means to the attainment of social goals. Sub-human life-forms such as ants and bees are able to coordinate their social activities on the basis of the stimulus of physiological differentiation.[2] The human organism is not, however, characterized by the instinctual responses necessary to this type of social order. Social order among human beings depends upon participation in the other through the communicable symbols of language.[1] Through communication the theoretically unlimited types of activity in which an individual may become engaged become coordinated along certain broad lines so that destructive conflict and aimless expenditure of energy is minimized. This organization, as we have seen, is not external to the individual, but forms the basic character of his selfhood.[2] Thus, behaviorally speaking, wherever there is a self, there is the attitude of the generalized other. This is axiomatic in Mead's world view. Manifestations of social order at the human level and the sharing of the attitude of the generalized other are identical behavioral phenomena in the process of human existence.

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[1] MSS, p. 323.

[2] See above, chapter two, pp. 164-165.

The significant symbols of language are all universals, and since the sole source of universality is the attitude of the generalized other appearing in a plurality of individuals who are in some way co-implicated in a social process, the use of language may be said to be the gift of the generalized other.[3]

When an individual uses spoken language, he in most cases considers what he is going to say. The bearer of the spoken word likewise considers what he has heard. Similarly, the user of the written language considers what he shall write, and his readers consider what they have read. This process of consideration is carried on, in a sense, within the individual organism, and goes by the name of "thinking." "Thinking," Mead says, "proceeds in terms of or by means of universals."[1] It is "conversational" in character--the conversation of the individual and the generalized other.[2] Mead describes this conversation as follows:

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[1] MSS, p. 81n15. See above, chapter two, pp. 225-227.

[2] See above, chapter two, p. 164.

[3] MSS, p. 146. See above, p. 247.

> Thinking is a process of conversation with one's self when the individual takes the attitude of the other, especially when he takes the common attitude of the whole group, when the symbol he uses is a common symbol, has a meaning common to the entire group, to everyone who is in it and anyone who might be in it. It is a process of communication with participation in the experience of other people.[3]

The individual is not a rational being until he has achieved such an "organized other" in his thought.[4] The dynamics of the thought process are those of role-taking, of the dialectic of the "I" and the "me," which has previously been discussed.[5]

Mead intends that the phrase, "participation in the experience of other people," be taken with utmost seriousness. This is one of the basic characteristics of the symbols of language--they make experiences undergone by one person or by separate groups of persons transferable in their behavioral significance to all members of the universe of discourse represented by the language. The individual, by taking the role of the generalized other in using language, literally sees through the eyes of others. This seeing enables him to adjust his own behavior in response to the group's reaction to what he is doing. This is what thought is all about--planning for the future on the basis of predictable leads from past experience. These leads belong to the individual because, having the attitude of the group as a whole, he responds to what is happening just as the others do.

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[1] *MSS*, p. 146n5. See also *PP*, p. 87; *PA*, p. 153.

[2] *SW*, pp. 246, 288; *PA*, p. 152; *MSS*, p. 155; *MT*, p. 376.

[3] *MT*, pp. 380-381.

[4] *PP*, p. 87.

[5] See above, chapter two, pp. 182-193, 217-224.

The others whose attitude the individual takes in the dialectic process of thinking may or may not be specifically identified. That is, the attitudes which characterize various groupings of people are of varying degrees of generality in their application. These degrees of generality are reflected in the thinking of the individuals who have the attitudes in question. Mead summarizes the matter this way:

> In abstract thought the individual takes the attitude of the generalized other toward himself, without reference to its expression in any particular other individuals; and in concrete thought he takes that attitude in so far as it is expressed in the attitudes toward his behavior of those other individuals with whom he is involved in the given social situation or act. But only by taking the attitude of the generalized other toward himself, in one or another of these ways, can he think at all; for only thus can thinking--or the internalized conversation of gestures which constitutes thinking--occur. And only through the taking by individuals of the attitude or attitudes of the generalized other toward themselves is the existence of a universe of discourse, as that system of common or social meanings which thinking presupposes as its context, rendered possible.[1]

A generalized other, as a shared behavioral response to a given set of conditions or stimuli, emerges in concert with the social activity of a given group of individuals. This group may be quite small in its extension, such as the immediate family unit. Or it may be quite large in its extension, such as speakers of the Spanish tongue.

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[1] *MSS*, pp. 155-156.

The thinking that emerges in the individual members of these groups will have correspondingly narrow or broad application, depending upon the extension of the generalized other with which the individual converses in his thought. The larger the group process represented by the generalized other, the more abstract and universally applicable his thought will be. Thus it is that the propositions of the most abstract type of thinking are stated in a form which any other intelligent individual will accept.[1] The objectivity of thought is found at this same point. The thought of the individual attains universality and impersonality precisely to the degree that he is able to crystallize more general group attitudes out of more particular ones.[2] The narrow-minded or biased individual is the one whose thinking consists of conversation with the attitude of a very narrowly circumscribed group. His "rationality" has very limited currency. Nevertheless, the universality implicit in the linguistic symbols which are the tools of his thought always represent for him a means by which to transcend the narrowness of his group reference, and thereby his own narrow-mindedness as well.[3]

The thinking individual represents a new entity, as contrasted to the individual who does not participate in an internalized conversation with the generalized other. This new entity is called by Mead the self or the personality. The "seat of the self" is the generalized other.[4] As Mead explains this statement at one point:

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[1] MSS, pp. 155-156n8.

[2] MSS, p. 90.

[3] MSS, p. 269n13.

[4] PA, p. 193.

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> The structure, then, on which the self is built is this response which is common to all, for one has to be a member of a community to be a self. Such responses are abstract attitudes, but they contribute just what we term a man's character. They give him what we term his principles, the acknowledged attitudes of all members of the community toward what are the values of that community. He is putting himself in the place of the generalized other, which represents the organized responses of all the members of the group.[1]

The structure of the self, in other words, is a function of the individual's having the attitude of the generalized other. "What goes to make up the organized self is the organization of the attitudes which are common to the group," Mead says.[2] When these organized attitudes appear in the individual, he has become a self.

This is not, as we have already discussed, the complete picture of the dynamics involved in being a self.[3] As Mead puts it:

> Of course we are not only what is common to all: each one of the selves is different from everyone else; but there has to be such a common structure as I have sketched in order that we may be members of a community at all. We cannot be ourselves unless we are also members in whom there is a community of attitudes which control the attitudes of all.[4]

The community attitude or the attitude of the generalized other not only grants the individual his place in the social process, with all of the rights and duties that go with it. It also represents the behavioral basis of reflection or consciousness of being such an object as a self.

Mead puts the matter quite clearly:

> The self as an object is a social object, but it is not necessary to social conduct or to the existence of other social objects.

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[1] __MSS__, p. 162. [2] __MSS__, p. 162.

[3] See above, chapter two, pp. 217-224.

[4] __MSS__, pp. 163-164.

> Such objects may be assumed to exist in the experience of lower animals, and in our own experience, without self-consciousness being present.[1]

Consciousness of being a self is therefore an emergent dimension of animate existence. It owes its emergence to the existence of certain very definite conditions. Mead describes these conditions as follows:

> In the experience in which the self appears, the individual finds himself acting as another with reference to himself. He becomes, to use the expression already employed, a generalized other, and finds in his experience a group attitude that then enables him to become an object to himself.[2]

And again:

> In a word, the self as an object becomes a part of the individual through his having assumed the generalized attitude of a member of the group to which that self belongs, ...[3]

When a given individual does in fact respond to his own activity with the attitude of the whole group, he has behaviorally transcended himself. Responding with the group attitude provides him as an individual with an "outside" platform from which to evaluate his actions as an individual. He becomes "conscious" of a new object in his experience--that object known as the "self." But new as the emergent self is, it still may be understood in terms of the concrete social process that is going on. "After all," Mead says, "what we mean by self-consciousness is an awakening in ourselves of the group of attitudes which we are arousing in others, ..."[4] Thus, when the individual successfully brings the social process within himself in the form of an organized set of behavioral responses to a given situation or set of stimuli, he may be said to have become a self.

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[1] _PA_, p. 411.

[2] _PA_, pp. 411-412.

[3] _PA_, p. 375.

[4] _MSS_, p. 163.

The learning of games is illustrative of this ongoing process of attaining selfhood:

> The game is then an illustration of the situation out of which an organized personality arises. In so far as the child does take the attitude of the other and allows that attitude of the other to determine the thing he is going to do with reference to a common end, he is becoming an organic member of society. . . .
> What goes on in the game goes on in the life of the child all the time. He is continually taking the attitudes of those about him, especially the roles of those who in some sense control him and on whom he depends. . . .[1]

Such is the process by which a personality arises. There are, of course, differences between the socialization that takes place in actual game playing, and that which occurs in the broader social environment of the child. The game lies entirely within the child's own experience, and the attitude of the generalized other which the child acquires in the game gets immediate expression in the child's experience.[2] Thus the child is perhaps able to acquire the morale of the game more readily than he can the morale of a more abstract society such as the family, the state, or the male sex.[3] Nevertheless, the period of childhood game playing is of inestimable value in the process of the socialization of the child, or, in what amounts to the same thing, in the process of the child's becoming an organized self. As Mead summarizes the matter:

> It is a period in which he likes "to belong," and he gets into organizations which come into existence and pass out of existence. *He becomes a something which can function in the organized whole*, and thus tends to determine himself in his relationship with the group to which he belongs. That process is one which is a striking stage in the development of the child's morale. It constitutes him a self-conscious member of the community to which he belongs.[4] (Italics mine.)

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[1] *MSS*, pp. 159-160.

[2] *MSS*, pp. 159, 160.

[3] *MSS*, p. 160.

[4] *MSS*, p. 160.

Through game playing, in other words, the individual acquires facility in internalizing the attitude of the generalized other, and thus in becoming an integrated self. Game playing is therefore to be regarded as a sort of laboratory of human becoming, for it is precisely the recognition of the generalized other in one's own experience that constitutes one a self.[1] The implication of this position for the educational process was certainly not lost upon Mead.[2]

It must be noted that there is a definite qualitative dimension to the process of selfhood, and that this qualitative dimension is a direct function of the kind of generalized other in terms of which the individual views himself, and of his success in so viewing himself. Mead says concerning self-realization:

> That is, the individual comes to realize himself just in so far as he can take the attitude of the group to which he belongs. He can approve or disapprove of himself in those terms.[3]

There is no other source of self-esteem. One's sense of personal worth and accomplishment is granted by the attitude of the generalized other. If it is not granted by the immediate social grouping, it must be gotten from a more abstract grouping which somehow transcends the more immediate and concrete other. But the individual self reached its "full development" only by "becoming an individual reflection of the general systematic pattern of social or group behavior in which it and the others are all involved."[4] Mead is unequivocal about this. As he says at another place:

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[1] _SW_, pp. 284-285.

[2] _MSS_, pp. 159; 264-265.

[3] _MT_, p. 415.

[4] _MSS_, p. 158.

> This getting of the broad activities of any given whole or organized society as such within the experiential field of any one of the individuals involved or included in that whole is, in other words, the essential basis and prerequisite of the fullest development of that individual's self: only in so far as he takes the attitudes of the organized social group to which he belongs toward the organized, cooperative social activity or set of such activities in which that group as such is engaged, does he develop a complete self or possess the kind of complete self he has developed.[1]

The emphasis here should be placed upon such words as "broad" and "whole" and "complete." There are an almost limitless number of social organizations and social activities which maintain themselves at any given time, and a given individual may be conscious of himself in terms of any number of them.[2] That is, an individual may generalize himself in terms of an indefinite number of group attitudes, and he may or may not recognize ways in which these attitudes implicate one another. The individual who derives his sense of selfhood from his role as head of the family, for example, may not be aware of the manner in which his racial attitudes and his political apathy feed back into his family role. He may lose the respect of the very group he idolizes simply because he does not see how the family must be generalized beyond itself if it is to maintain itself. Similarly, a man may be a very good mechanic and derive a great deal of satisfaction and self-esteem from his ability to practice his trade, but he lacks a completeness in his selfhood if he is cut off from such realms as music, athletics, and social movements. To be a complete self is to recognize the ways in which what one does as a member of various smaller social groupings is relevant to much more abstract social groupings, and ultimately to the whole process of human social evolution. To put it quite simply, Mead suggests that the quality of fullness or completeness of self is a direct function of the breadth or generality of the attitude of the other which has been internalized and which is the source of the experience of selfhood. The "world citizen" is a fuller self than the Klansman.

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[1] MSS, p. 155. [2] MSS, p. 265.

To this point much of the discussion of the relevance of the attitudes of the generalized other to the process of human existence has been concerned with the individual self, how it comes into being, and how it functions in a rational manner. But as was suggested at the beginning of this section, this is not the whole story with respect to the relevance of the generalized other.[1] The rest of the story has to do with the maintenance of the social process itself. Here, too, fullness and order are gifts of the generalized other.

Mead affirms that common responses from individuals with respect to various organized aspects of the social process are all that make society "possible."[2] In one place he makes the following summary statement:

> What is essential to the order of society in its fullest expression on the basis of the theory of the self that we have been discussing is, then, an organization of common attitudes which shall be found in all individuals.[3]

And again, after affirming the necessity of internalizing the broad activities of the social whole in order to attain selfhood in its fullest expression, Mead goes on to present the social side of the same internalization process:

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[1] See above, pp. 249-250. [2] MSS, p. 161.

[3] MSS, p. 323. See also p. 256.

> And on the other hand, the complex co-operative processes and activities and institutional functionings of organized human society are also possible only in so far as every individual involved in them or belonging to that society can take the general attitudes of all other such individuals with reference to these processes and activities and institutional functionings, and to the organized social whole of experiential relations and interactions thereby constituted--and can direct his own behavior accordingly.[1]

If each individual does not share a common attitude toward what is going on, at least along generalized lines, what is going on will be a manifestation of chaos rather than of order.

Mead's point is actually quite simple, but its simplicity should not be allowed to obscure its profundity. It may be illustrated by a hypothetical "game" situation. Several players are gathered upon a field with a ball, but the players do not share a generalized attitude with respect to what is to be done with the ball. Some wish to throw it, others would kick it, others would run with it, others would hit it with a bat, and still others would carry it in a racquet. With the individual players having such conflicting attitudes about what is to be done, the result would be that no game would take place. A game might evolve out of their social interaction at this point, and in the event this were to take place it would be found that an attitude of the generalized other would be evolving right along with the playing of the game. Successful game playing depends upon the players sharing common expectations or allegiance to rules. Such common attitudes in turn emerge out of a process of common experience

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[1] MSS, p. 155.

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and interaction. In the final analysis, the existence of social order among human beings and the sharing at some level of the attitude of the generalized other are in Mead's view tautological descriptions of the same phenomenon. Order and the generalized other do not exist apart from one another. The attitude of the generalized other is the ordering principle of human social existence.

One of the chief means by which the generalized other effects social order is through the emergence of social institutions. A social institution is identified whenever the whole community acts toward the individual under certain circumstances in an identical way.[1] The institution is thus a kind of "social habit" which gives form to the implementation of attitudes which the individual members of a society do in fact share in common.[2] The existence of social institutions insures that each individual in the society knows precisely where he stands with respect to other individuals in it, and with respect to the whole. He is given his limitations, his rights, and his duties in this form. When he goes against the institution, he can expect retribution; and when he is cooperative, he can expect a certain type of reward. The whole system of safeguarding individual rights--of making it possible for individuals to interact with one another in large group settings--is dependent in large measure upon the existence of the social institutions. As Mead puts it: "We cannot have rights unless we have common attitudes."[3] A "right," in other words, is only so in so far as all or nearly all members of a society share a common attitude about it.[1] The right to own private property is a right in the U.S.A. because most of the people share this generalized attitude, but it would not be a right in a great number of tribal societies in which no such generalized attitude manifested itself.

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[1] MSS, pp. 167, 261. [2] MI, p. 376. [3] MSS, p. 164.

The attitude of the generalized other which manifests itself in social institutions does not receive expression or implementation in simply one form, but is a single attitude that is expressed in a number of forms. Mead illustrates this point as follows:

> The institution represents a common response of the community to a particular situation. This common response is one which, of course, varies with the character of the individual. In the case of theft the response of the sheriff is different from that of the attorney-general, from that of the judge and the jurors, and so forth; and yet they all are responses that maintain property, which involve the recognition of the property right in others. There is a common response in varied forms. And these variations, as illustrated in the different officials, have an organization which gives unity to the variety of responses. . . . When we arouse such attitudes, we are taking the attitude of what I have termed a "generalized other." Such organized sets of responses are related to each other; if one calls out one such set of responses, he is implicitly calling out the others as well.[2]

Thus the generality of the other as expressed in various social institutions does provide a system of order, but it does so in a manner which not only allows, but also demands, a plurality of role-functions on the part of the individuals and sub-institutions within the larger institution. The emphasis, when dealing with the notion of the generalized other, must be placed upon organization as much as it is upon generality. It is a social concept through and through, and wherever it is a functioning dynamic in human existence it will find expression in greatly varied ways. This is perhaps the chief function

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[1] MSS, p. 161. [2] MSS, p. 261.

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of the attitude of the generalized other--it provides the unity necessary for multiplicity to maintain itself in the process of social interaction. This is why it is so "necessary" if social existence is to be "possible."[1]

Mead does point out that some social institutions, even though they do provide an organized framework for society, become "oppressive, stereotyped, and ultraconservative."[2] The religious cult or organized church is cited as an example of such a development.[3] In this case the broadly universal religious ideal of a common brotherhood of mankind under God becomes lost amidst the dynamics of the immediate history and life of the concrete social community.[4] Individuality and expression of creative thought and behavior on the part of individual members is blotted out rather than encouraged. Such a development, according to Mead, is "undesirable but not necessary."[5] Many institutions are actually flexible and progressive, fostering individuality rather than submerging it. All the institution needs to do for the maintenance of social order is:

> . . . . to define the social, or socially responsible, patterns of individual conduct in only a very broad and general sense, affording plenty of scope for originality, flexibility, and variety of such conduct.[6]

In order to facilitate understanding of the difference between desirable and undesirable institutional forms, Mead points out a distinction between social "conventions" which are "arbitrary" and "isolated" in character; and "manners" and "morals" which, on the

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[1] See above, pp.259-260. [2] MSS, p. 262. [3] MSS, pp. 262, 296.
[4] MSS, p. 296. [5] MSS, p. 262. [6] MSS, p. 262.

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contrary, belong to "the nature of the community in its essential character as this expresses itself in the social reactions."[1] The "nature of the community" presumably refers to the broader generalized other it seeks to embody, rather than to the narrower forms of communal life which it has actually attained. Mead is not too clear on this point, unfortunately.

The distinction between the attitudes of abstract and concrete generalized others does, however, clearly belong to Mead.[2] He summarizes the difference as follows:

> Some of them [human social communities] are concrete social classes or subgroups such as political parties, clubs, corporations, which are actually functional social units, in terms of which their individual members are directly related to one another. The others are abstract social classes or subgroups, such as the class of debtors and the class of creditors, in terms of which their individual members are related to one another only more or less indirectly, and which only more or less indirectly function as social units, but which afford or represent unlimited possibilities for the widening and enriching of the social relations among all the individual members of the given society as an organized and unified whole.[3]

It seems accurate to suggest from this passage that the more concrete a given social structure is, the less likely it is that the "other" generalized in the attitudes of its individual members will have the breadth or abstract character of the generalized other shared by members of abstract social structures. The abstract community is by its very definition more inclusive in scope, although it has been noted that Mead warns against assuming that all concrete social institutions are restrictive in character.

Mead cites religious and economic attitudes as illustrations of the inclusiveness of abstract generalized others.[1] They represent attitudes into which one may enter with any actual or ideal human being with whom one can communicate.[2] This universality owes itself primarily to the working character of these attitudes in the social process at large, not to any philosophical abstractions involved in them.[3] People assist and care for one another, and people do work out methods by which they can provide one another with various commodities through an agreed upon medium of exchange. The universality of religious and economic attitudes is grounded in a concrete behavioral process.

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[1] _MSS_, p. 263. [2] _MSS_, pp. 155-157. [3] _MSS_, p. 157.

The key to the limits of abstract generalized others is communication. What Mead calls the "logical universe of discourse"--a system of constant logical structure underlying various linguistic forms--is the most inclusive and extensive of the abstract social groupings whose attitude an individual may take.[4] The attitudes of religion and economics are dependent for their existence upon the logical universe of discourse, and are also the attitudes which most closely approximate the attitude of universal communication.[5] These attitudes, and others like them, at least "open the door" toward the emergence of a universal society.[6] They involve individuals in forms

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[1] MSS, pp. 281-298.

[2] MSS, p. 290.

[3] MSS, p. 289.

[4] MSS, p. 157.

[5] MSS, pp. 282-283. This listing need not be treated as exhaustive. Mead's own view of science as "the evolutionary process grown self-conscious" carries with it certain dimensions of universality which suggest that the scientific attitude should also be included. See above, chapter one, pp. 62-66.

[6] MSS, p. 284.

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of social organization which actually point beyond their concretion to broader forms of social organization, even when the persons involved have no particular ideals for the realization of such forms.[1] Existing barriers are broken down. As Mead explains at one place:

> The given individual's membership in several of these abstract social classes or subgroups makes possible his entrance into *definite social relations* (however indirect) with an almost infinite number of other individuals who also belong to or are included within one or another of these abstract social classes or subgroups *cutting across functional lines of demarcation* which divide different human social communities from one another, and including individual members from several (in some cases from all) such communities.[2] (Italics mine.)

It is this function of membership in abstract social groupings, involving taking the attitude of a generalized other of broader dimensions, which makes both personal and social reform or reconstruction possible.

The uncritical reader of Mead might possibly get the impression that Mead's views concerning the self and society leave both processes locked into a particular form, with no room for change. This is, of course, in basic tension with the analysis of chapter one, in which the notions of evolution and emergence were seen to be fundamental to Mead's whole outlook. If there is an issue here, however, it cannot be resolved simply on the basis of that analysis. What is called for is an analysis of Mead's view of social control, and of the means of social reconstruction.

There is no question but that the individual self is socially controlled in Mead's view. The structure of the self--the "me"--is a structure of attitudes internalized from the social process.[1] There is ultimately nothing to the "me" expept the attitude of various generalized others. The individual self is also socially controlled in his thinking by the generalized other, for thought is simply the conversation of the "I" with the generalized other.[2] Thus the individual self is socially controlled both in so far as he reflexively experiences himself as a self, and in so far as he acts rationally in the pursuit of his life-goals. He is controlled by that same set of group attitudes which have emerged in the social history of the groups of which he is a part--attitudes to which the group ultimately owes its very existence. This kind of social control does admit to degrees of effectiveness, these degrees being a function of the success of individuals in actually internalizing the attitudes of the generalized other, but the very existence both of organized selves and of organized societies testifies to the existence of commonly held attitudes of the generalized other.[3] There is thus a kind of unity typifying and controlling every social group and its member selves--the unity of a generalized other which has emerged in the social history of the group in question.

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[1] *MSS*, pp. 290-298.

[2] *MSS*, p. 157.

This unity does not, however, lock the society and its selves into a static mold. The unity of the attitude of the generalized other is an achieved or emergent unity, and it is subject to reform or reconstruction through the activities of individual group members. The character of the "I" as a source of emergent novelty has already been discussed.[1] What remains to be emphasized is the means by which the "I" makes its creative contribution. That means, to put it briefly, is a generalized other of more abstract dimensions than the ones currently controlling the self and its society.

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[1] See above, chapter two, pp. 224-231.

[2] MSS, p. 155. See above, chapter two, pp. 202, 214-215.

[3] SW, pp. 290-291.

The transcendence of any given attitude controlling the organization of a society and the thinking and self-concepts of its member selves can only be effected by generalizing oneself in terms of a more inclusive community attitude. As Mead puts it: "The only way we can react against the disapproval of the entire community is by setting up a higher sort of community which in a certain sense outvotes the one we find."[2] This "higher sort of community" is not as ethereal as it may sound. It is always implicit in the ends and procedures of the existing community.[3] These ends and procedures all owe their existence in some way to the occurrence of communication, and the fact of communication places the infinite dimensions of the logical universe of discourse at one's disposal.[4] By envisioning broader possibilities, the individual is able to transcend prevailing limits on the inclusiveness of his social setting. Mead describes this process of self and group transcendence as follows:

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[1] See above, chapter two, pp. 227-230.

[2] MSS, pp. 167-168. See also p. 389.

[3] PA, p. 623.

[4] MSS, p. 273n.15. See above, p. 267.

> The social pattern is always larger than the group it makes possible. It includes the enemy and the guest and the morale of behavior toward him. Its mechanism of communication carries with it the possibility of conversation with others who are not members of the group. It has in it the implication of the logical universe of discourse. If symbolization can be stated in terms of the behavior of primitive communication, then every distinctively human being belongs to a possibly larger society than that within which he actually finds himself. It is this, indeed, which is implied in the rational character of the human animal. And these larger patterns afford a basis for the criticism of existing conditions and in an even unconscious way tend to realize themselves in social conduct.[1]

One must continually emphasize that when Mead speaks in this manner of expanding an existing personal or social structure in terms of a broader structure he is not talking about something that occurs merely at an ideological level. When problems occur which require the reconstruction of certain social structures (and therefore of certain common attitudes) he directs attention to the objective social field. This field is comprised of a number of personal and sub-group interests, and the test of the reconstruction is always how well these interests are cared for in the emergent situation.[2] As Mead says:

> Any such social reconstruction, if it is to be at all far-reaching, presupposes a basis of common social interests shared by all of the individual members of the given human society in which that reconstruction occurs; shared, that is, by all the individuals whose minds must participate in, or whose minds bring about, that reconstruction.[3]

Thus, while ideation is involved in reconstruction, the basis of the ideation must be there in the social situation, and it is there also that it is determined whether or not the reconstruction hypothesized becomes reality. "One may be somewhat ahead of his time," Mead says, "but that which he brings forward must belong to the life of the community to which he belongs."[1] If what is brought forward does in fact belong to the community, i.e., if it does in fact become accepted as a more adequate social structure, the result is a new reality.

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[1] George Mead, "Cooley's Contribution to American Social Thought," American Journal of Sociology, XXXV, No. 5, (March, 1930), 705-706. See also MSS, pp. 272-273.

[2] SW, p. 148.

[3] MSS, p. 308.

This new reality involves both the self and society. A new common attitude--a new generalized other--emerges, and this emergence carries with it changes in both the social structure and the selves who are a part of it. Mead describes the dynamics at work here as follows:

> . . . social reconstruction by the individual members of any organized human society entails self or personality reconstruction in some degree or other by each of these individuals, and vice versa, for, since theit selves or personalities are constituted by their organized social relations to one another, they cannot reconstruct those selves or personalities without also reconstructing, to some, extent, the given social order, which is, of course, likewise constituted by their organized social relations to one another. . . . or in short, social reconstruction and self or personality reconstruction are the two sides of a single process--the process of human social evolution.[2]

This evolutionary process takes now one form and now another, but it constantly features changes in selves and in the social structures which determine what selves shall become. The occurrence of such changes is an indication of changes which take place in the attitude of the generalized other, which ultimately gives form both to selves and society. Thus it is that in the process of human social evolution the self and the generalized other feed reciprocally into one another,

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[1] MSS, p. 324. [2] MSS, p. 309.

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each providing an aspect of the creative process which is necessary to the establishment of the other. It is through taking the attitude of the generalized other that the self comes into being, and it is through the creative activity of the self that the attitude of the generalized other is enlarged or diminished from what it has been.

The outcome of this evolutionary process of social interaction belongs to the future, and is therefore unknown in any concrete sense. One may, nevertheless, speak in terms of goals, and the ideal goal of human society in Mead's eyes is the realization of the promise implicit in the most comprehensive generalized other, the logical universe of discourse. As he states the matter in one place:

> The human social ideal--the ideal or ultimate goal of human social progress--is the attainment of a universal human society in which all human individuals would possess a perfected social intelligence, such that all social meanings would each be similarly reflected in their respective individual consciousnesses--such that the meanings of any one individual's acts or gestures. . . would be the same for any other individual whatever who responded to them.[1]

And in another place he says:

> The ideal of human society is one which does bring people so closely together in their interrelationships, so fully develops the necessary system of communication, that the individuals who exercise their own peculiar functions can take the attitude of those whom they affect. . . . If that system of communication could be made theoretically perfect, the individual would affect himself as he affects others in every way. That would be the ideal of communication, an ideal attained in logical discourse wherever it is understood. . . . Universal discourse is then the formal ideal of communication.[2]

This involves the development of the whole mechanism of social relationship which holds society together.[3] Only some individuals are able to take an attitude in their thinking that is this abstract. One finds an approximation of it in the ideal communities of the universal religions. Mead asserts that these communities must be said to have existence to some extent, but he also points out that these communities in their actual, concrete forms of organization cannot realize their ideal goals.[1] But the process of the actualization of that which heretofor has been only ideal goes on. Its direction, although not consistently so, is toward increased communication and cooperation.[2] The logical universe of discourse, as an attitude of the generalized other, plays an important role in this process.

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[1] _MSS_, p. 310. [2] _MSS_, p. 327. [3] _MSS_, p. 272.

What will happen to the individual if the goal is reached? He will certainly not be submerged in the whole. The whole cannot exist without the contribution of the individual members. Mead is not talking about a merging of the many into the unity of universal communication. He is rather talking about universal communication as the ideal state in which society may evolve and change intelligently. In this state of "interlocking interdependence" the individual will be able to respond to his own activity exactly as everyone else does, but it will still be his own activity.[3] Each individual will exercise "his own peculiar function."[4] He will contribute to the process that uniqueness which he and he alone can contribute. The individual self is not merely a creature of maximum social participation. The truth is that his maximum social participation really serves his ability to attain maximum individual differentiation.[1] To be a self in the fullest sense of the term is to be a mixture both of creativity and control. Universal communication--the formal realization of the generalized other conceived in its broadest dimensions--provides the context for just this sort of self-expression.

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[1] MSS, p. 327.

[2] MSS, p. 310.

[3] MSS, p. 310.

[4] MSS, p. 327.

With maximum opportunities for a self-expression which would be both universally stimulated and universally communicated, the process of human social evolution would evolve in a manner that would be universally disciplined. False starts, dead ends, retrogressive changes, etc., would be held to a minimum. Every emergent development would "fit" into the broad social scheme. The world-process would continue to develop, but without many of its negative aspects. This, however, is only an ideal, and Mead does not suggest that its actualization is at hand.

The Generalized Other and the Structure of Reality

The fundamental interpretation of Mead guiding this dissertation has been laid out at some depth in chapter one. The result of that analysis has been the identification of four closely interrelated but distinguishable ideas which are discernable throughout the entire spectrum of Mead's thinking. These have been termed the notions of relativity, evolution, emergence, and activity. The "reality" in which Mead finds these notions is, from this point of view, one of perspectives experienced situationally. It is a process

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[1] MSS, p. 326.

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of becoming rather than a state of being, and is characterized in its becoming by the appearance of novel forms and structures. Governing the appearance of these forms and structures is the process of what is going on at a given time in the activities of various forms of life which have come into being, chiefly the activities of the beings comprising the human social community.

The analysis of this community, presented from one perspective in chapter two and from another in the present chapter, has brought to the fore the notion of the generalized other. The thesis that is implicitly emerging in these two chapters is that the form of togetherness designated as the generalized other is of crucial importance in the ongoing process of the creation and maintenance of reality. This thesis is not intended to be in tension with the analysis of chapter one. On the contrary, the intention is to show that the notion of the generalized other reflects each of the primary ideas there presented, and that, since the generalized other is the structure representing the unity of the reality process, it is perhaps the prime exemplification of these notions. Suggestions to this effect have here and there marked the progress of the analysis to this point. The purpose of this final section is to state these relations more specifically, and to summarize the ways in which the generalized other is an integral aspect of the process that is "reality."

To begin with, the concept of the generalized other refers to a reality structure that is relative in character. It is a pluralistic concept. This is clearly the case, even though Mead characteristically uses the definite article in speaking of it. The use of the definite article indicates that Mead is speaking of a *category*. Within the category "generalized other" are to be found an indefinite number of concrete and abstract generalized others of specified dimensions.[1] When Mead is referring to these specific generalized others he feels free to use the indefinite article.[2] The relative character of "the" generalized other is clearly apparent in the following summary quotation:

> The self-conscious human individual, then, takes or assumes the organized social attitudes of the given social group or community *(or of some one section thereof)* to which he belongs, toward the social problems of various kinds which confront that group or community *at any given time*, and which arise in connection with the *correspondingly different* social projects or organized co-operative enterprises in which that group or community as such is engaged, . . .[3] (Italics mine.)

This passage suggests that there are generalized others of smaller dimensions within a larger generalized other, that the dimensions of a generalized other are dependent upon the point in time at which the other is generalized, and that the identification of a generalized other is bound to the social activity that is going on.

One may further suggest, on the basis of the preceding discussion of the dynamics of personal and social reconstruction, that individual members of a concrete social group that are in some way involved in a common activity at the same point in time may nevertheless be viewing themselves in terms of quite different generalized others.[4]

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[1] *PA*, p. 390.

[2] See, for example, *MSS*, p. 256; *PP*, p. 87.

[3] *MSS*, p. 156.

[4] See above, pp. 267-271.

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Certainly this is always a possibility. The individual self always reflects a vast complexity of group affiliations--family, school, friends, clubs, race, citizenship, etc.--in terms of which he may objectify himself in his intelligent participation in social activity. Which of these generalized others will be effective in his activity is relative to all the factors involved in the situation, including the unpredictable individuality which is a part of the structure of his selfhood. The individual may, in fact, be generalizing himself in terms of a plurality of others at the same time in the sociality of his mind. In such a case it must be said that the individual exists in several realities, some of which may be breaking down and others of which may just be emerging.

Reality, from Mead's viewpoint, is entirely a matter of perspectives. There is no appeal beyond these perspectives to an absolute structure lying behind them and somehow transcending them. As a matter of empirical social fact, however, the individual's reality or perspective is socially acquired through the dynamics of role-taking. In this manner the generic characteristics of the perspectives of many individuals become a part of the perspective of still further individuals. There is, in fact, in the thinking of all individuals comprising a social unit, a common perspective. This common perspective of the generalized other is the perspective in terms of which all individuals implicated in that social unit see reality.[1] This generalized reality picture is literally the world for all those individuals who share that social response. The only way to transcend this reality is, through the mechanism of thought, to place oneself in a different perspective. The switch from a geocentric to a heliocentric world view is an example of this unique ability of the thinking individual to expand reality by placing himself in a different perspective.[1] Reality is expanded, that is, when the community at large makes the same transition in thought as the individual in whose thought the emergent dimension appears.

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[1] PA, p. 610; SW, pp. 312-313; PP, p. 168.

This common, social dimension of the relative universe cannot be overemphasized. Mead's notion of relativity does not imply that reality is in a state of disunity. There is a vastly complex life-process going on which may be viewed in terms of a gigantic social activity. Out of this social activity emerges a generalized perspective or view of reality which is shared by nearly everyone. The individual self, Mead says, is socialized into:

> . . . a generalized landscape in which the magnitudes and forms of objects are not distorted by the perspectives of vision, the dominant distance sense. This generalized attitude of the other is an assumption of a space that is absolute over against the relativity of individual organisms.[2]

The minute differences which are known to be there as a function of distance and the speed of light on the basis of Einstein's theory are rounded off in favor of a common reality which suffices for most of the activities in which people engage. The result is an attitude of the generalized other which is an expression of the whole complex of things which make up the reality of our environment.[3] This attitude

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[1] PA, p. 182. [2] PA, p. 310. [3] PA, p. 193.

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of the generalized other may change with the discovery of new dimensions heretofore hidden from view, but it nevertheless remains a common reality. However important and valid the differences in individual perspectives may be, there is always found a level of generality at which all members of the social process respond to the objects in question in the same manner. One individual may view the tree as the dwelling place of the god (and that is a definite kind of reality), while another may view it in terms of its market value, but both know that they will be bruised if they should stumble into it.

This discussion of the generalized other as the locus of reality, within the framework of the notion of relativity, would be incomplete without taking special notice of the fact that Mead conceives the attitude of the generalized other as including the realm of the inanimate every bit as much as that of the animate. He is talking about reality as a whole, in so far as this reality represents a meaningful part of the experience of individuals and social groups. Wherever there is a communicable common response given to a stimulus-object, that object represents an aspect of the generalized other. As Mead carefully explains:

> It is possible for inanimate objects, no less than for other human organisms, to form parts of the generalized and organized--the completely socialized--other for any given human individual, in so far as he responds to such objects socially or in a social fashion (by means of the mechanism of thought, the internalized conversation of gestures). Any thing, any object or set of objects, whether animate or inanimate, human or animal, or merely physical--toward which he acts, or to which he responds, socially, is an element in what for him is the generalized other; by taking the attitudes of which toward himself he becomes conscious of himself as an object or individual, and thus develops a self

or personality.[1]

Thus the whole of what is often termed "nature" is a meaningful part of man's experience--is his environment--through the process of communication in which man takes the attitude of stone, tree, and street just as he takes the attitude of mother, teacher, and classmate.[2] The world that is simply "there" in an unquestioned fashion as the realm of means for the solving of problems is a generalized other, a social creation built up out of the process of communication. There is a common world because there are common experiences and communications of these experiences; and the "content" of this common world is both personal and impersonal, spiritual and physical, historical and natural.

The situational or relative character of the generalized other has been established. There are a plurality of such generalized others. It must be added that each of these generalized others represents a stage in a particular evolutionary process. That is, the structure of togetherness represented by a particular generalized other is a structure that has undergone a process of evolution in order to become what it now is. It has a definite temporal dimension, which means it has a past out of which it has evolved and also a future into which it shall continue to evolve.[3] One can note this temporal evolutionary process in every kind of social grouping. The platform of one political party becomes the platform of another as time passes by. The revolutionary attitude of the labor movement in the United States in its early stages becomes a conservative attitude in the contemporary period. The attitude of hard work and frugality--the so-called "Protestant Ethic"--is currently evolving into something quite different. Example can be multiplied upon example. A generalized other is as evolutionary as any other reality structure. This holds true even for the generalized other in one of its broader extensions, the structure of the globe upon which we live. The passage of time entails a history of nature.

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[1] MSS, p. 154 n.7.

[2] The perception of physical things is a social process involving the dynamics of role-taking. See the discussions of "resistance," chapter one, pp. 124-125; chapter two, pp. 184-185.

[3] MSS, p. 156.

Further, the kind of evolutionary progression observed in the passage of a generalized other through history is marked by the phenomenon of emergence. The unpredictable aspect of the self which exists in conversation with the attitude of the generalized other is creative of novel dimensions in that same attitude. Differences in the perspectives of individuals result, through the process of communication, in differences in the attitudes of whole communities. The New Testament, for example, records the instrumentality of Paul in extending the Christian insight beyond the confines of the Jewish Community.[1] The formation of the League of Nations and the United Nations represents a stage in the emergence of the attitude of a world community, just as the formation of City-States and Nation-States represents an emergence out of the attitudes of the clan and the tribe.

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[1] See especially the Acts of the Apostles and Paul's epistle to the Galatians, passim.

Fraternities accept Negro members, women wear mini-skirts and smoke cigarettes, the schools take over the bulk of responsibility for the socialization of children; all of these represent emergent developments in the attitudes of various generalized others. The social process is one of interaction among groups, sub-groups, and individuals. Out of such interactions emerge attitudes which were literally unthinkable before the interaction took place.

This is the key to the changing form of the generalized other. The generalized other is born out of a process of social activity, and it undergoes change in response to continued social activity.[1] In the final analysis, the inclusiveness of any generalized other is directly dependent upon the character of the cooperative act that is in progress.[2] The so-called "white backlash" to the civil rights movement represents a particular kind of social activity which reflects a generalized other of restricted dimensions. The civil rights movement, presumably, reflected a generalized other of somewhat broader dimensions. The social process moves along in response to areas of social concern which become problematic. The response to a given social problem, such as the integration of black-skinned people into the mainstream of American life or the conservation of natural resources, may be made from the standpoint of any number of abstract generalized others. But the response which is made reflects the attitude of a very specific generalized other, at least in so far as the response is shared in common by a number of individuals or groups

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[1] MSS, p. 156.

[2] PA, p. 390.

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of individuals. In so far as this empirical response is characterized by novelty, reality is transformed in the process of the completion of the social act.

The future toward which the social act is moving contains an indefinite number of generalized others, but the present in terms of which the social act is now unfolding actualizes only a few or perhaps only one of these generalized others. Thus, ideally, the generalized other in some way transcends the social process; but, empirically, it is found totally within the process. This is a distinction which is hinted at by Mead, but never totally developed.[1] It will be taken up again in chapter four.

To summarize, the experience of reality in its most inclusive sense, which is the reverse side of the experience of selfhood, comes through the taking of the attitude of a generalized other. This is the case even when one is engaged in the process of the reconstruction of that reality, for the reconstruction must be communicable. The attitude of the generalized other which one takes--reality, in other words--is:

1) a situational construct,
2) in a process of becoming,
3) marked by the emergence of the novel, and
4) determined in relation to the social act in which it arises as a means.

Speaking more specifically, this attitude of the generalized other

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[1] See the discussion of social reconstruction above, pp. 267-271.

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is an integral aspect of:

1) the significant symbols of language,
2) the ability of the individual to think,
3) the thoughts that he does in fact think,
4) the individual's experience of the world around him,
5) the individual's experience of himself as a self,
6) the fullness of the self thus experienced,
7) any activity involving the cooperation of selves, and
8) the general direction of the social process as a whole, considered in terms of goals characterizing various sub-processes.

In other words, in so far as "reality" is significant or meaningful to human beings, it is so in terms of the attitude of the generalized other. One may state, without infringing too far into the realm of mythological language, that in Mead's view the generalized other lies at the base of reality. Reality is created and destroyed in the dialogue between the self as individual and the self as a reflection of the generalized other. It is but a short step from this summary statement to asking the question concerning the relationship between the reality structure Mead calls the generalized other and that reality which in many religious traditions is called "God."

CHAPTER IV

THE CONCEPT OF THE GENERALIZED OTHER AS THE MATRIX OF A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

From Philosophical Analysis to Theological Construction

The assumption informing this investigation from its inception is that there are notions of potentially deep theological significance to be found in the thought of George Mead. Chief among these notions is the concept of the generalized other, although no less important are the metaphysical principles implicitly guiding the rest of his work. The investigation has to this point been restricted to the analytic task of determining the precise character of Mead's metaphysical stance, and of outlining the central concepts of his social psychology and the manner of their dynamic interaction.[1] This analytic task may now be said to be complete--not in the sense that there is nothing left to be said concerning Mead, but in the sense that the interpretation of Mead guiding this dissertation has been adequately spelled out. Analysis must now give way to synthesis. The goal, using the foundation provided by Mead, is to press beyond Mead to the application of his insights to realms where his own thinking did not or could not carry him. It is to continue his creativity--to

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[1] The use of the term "metaphysics" follows that of John Dewey in Experience and Nature (New York: Dover, 1958), p. 51: "Metaphysics is cognizance of the generic traits of existence."

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bring the promise of his thought to a fulfillment in a new area.

This entails a departure from Mead, both from what he actually says, and from the limits within which he contains his own theorization and investigation. The concept of the generalized other, for example, will be given much more attention than Mead himself actually gives it. It will be expanded in a manner that Mead might well consider to be overly speculative, for its role in his own thinking is largely limited to the discipline of social psychology. There are a number of brief notations in his writing that do in fact point beyond this limitation, but they are not developed to any appreciable degree. While his work does contain an implicit metaphysical system, he does not view himself as a metaphysician or philosopher on a grand scale. He seeks not to see the universe as a whole, but merely to see enough of the universe to enable human social conduct to proceed intelligently within it.[1] Add to these self-imposed limitations the fact that his untimely death truncated his career at its peak, before any systematic presentation of his mature vision could be written. The apparent conclusion is that any attempt to deal seriously, comprehensively, and at depth with this man's thought will take the investigator into areas of emerging insight and applicability. If the interpretation of Mead here presented is accurate, nothing could be more "Mead-like" than that his students should transcend his work with emergent formulations of their own. Fidelity both to the spirit of Mead the man and to the content of Mead the thinker demands that the utilization of Mead include some departure from Mead.

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[1] PA, pp. 626-627.

Such departure from Mead characterizes much of the content of this chapter and the one following it. But one must carefully note that this departure from Mead is of a particular type. It may be characterized as an expansion of Mead rather than as a rejection of him. The manifest intent of these chapters is to bring to full formulation some of the aspects of Mead's thinking which to this point have been lying fallow. This expansion will take place within both the Meadian spirit and the Meadian metaphysic as outlined in chapter one.

In the judgment of this writer, Mead's empirical, experimental, pragmatic approach to his work is one which is entirely appropriate to theological speculation in our time. The theological community is witnessing widespread dissatisfaction with theological systems which either claim to see too clearly matters pertaining to ultimate reality, or which seem too divorced from matters of common, everyday concern. The prevailing spirit is highly critical of many theological formulations of the past. The "God is dead" phenomenon, short-lived as it was, is symptomatic of this critical spirit. Hand in hand with criticism, however, one observes a correlative spirit of confusion. The critical points are being made, but the critics seem to be having trouble getting beyond their criticism to the continuing task of theological reconstruction. If there is a glaring need in the field of contemporary theology, it is, in this writer's opinion, the need to venture forth with new theological conceptualizations which, while accepting the validity of many of the criticisms, transcend them in reconstruction. What is required is an openness to the world, to experience, and to the future. By "openness" is meant the willingness to observe, to catalog, to compare, and finally to construct a system of thought which seems to deal with the data a little more adequately or from a little different viewpoint. Openness also involves the willingness to be shown to be wrong at any point, and to adjust one's thinking accordingly. It involves a seriousness of effort and purpose, coupled with a healthy sense of one's own limitations as but a single member of the theological community. This is the spirit which Mead imparts to his readers, and it is the spirit in which this dissertation is being written.

Mead's world-view is also being adopted. The ontogenetic notion of relativity, evolution, emergence, and activity seem as descriptive of the world to this writer as they do to Mead. They seem quite consistent with the experience of man in contemporary times. Whatever speculations are set forth in the ensuing pages will be housed within this fundamental metaphysical framework. This is not a matter to be argued; it is a simple statement of purpose. The intent of this dissertation is to put forward a framework of theological interpretation which is inspired by George Mead and informed by the same metaphysical principles informing his thinking. It is a suggested perspective, not a position paper. No claim is being advanced that this is "the" direction theological reconstruction must take. There are doubtless many directions open to men who wish to contribute to this task, and subsequent experience may show that what is here presented is not even the most helpful way of utilizing

Mead's insights. But it is one way, and the task is undertaken in the hope that the doing of theology in this manner will be found helpful to others who also see the need to transcend the merely critical dimensions of doing theology. The old household proverb is very descriptive of reality: "Nothing ventured; nothing gained."

It is for the sake of a venture in constructive theology that the questions of the identification of the contemporary theological mood and of what constitutes a modern world-view have been so lightly passed over in a mere two paragraphs. These are highly complex questions which have been and continue to be matters of a great deal of debate. Considerable effort might be expended in setting forth various arguments as to how the ontogenetic categories abstracted from Mead do and do not accurately reflect the assumptions of all or a portion of that nebulous grouping which is loosely described as "modern man." This would merely serve to shift attention from the true center of focus, which is upon sensitivity to a theologically pregnant metaphysic and the beginning of a theological system which draws deeply upon that metaphysic. Our interest is in the creation of a new theological perspective. Time and the reaction of the community at large will determine whether or not this attempt is adequate to the demands of "modernity."

What does need some discussion at this point is the meaning of the term "theological." Most of those who self-consciously devote themselves to the task of writing "theology" include in their work a few words concerning their conception of what theology is. It is frequently the case that there are radical differences among

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theologians as to their various understandings of the nature of theology. Recognizing this pluralism of outlook, one is tempted simply to state that "theology" is that which theologians do, and that "the theological" is that to which the theologian responds positively in his professional capacity. This is probably too facile, but it does contain an insight of great importance. There does not at the present time appear to be wide-spread agreement in the theological community as to what is and what is not "theology" or "theological."

In the work here being attempted, the term "theological" is to be taken in a very broad, formal sense as that which pertains to or expresses the power of those structures and dynamics of existence upon which all else depends. The term "existence" is used here in a very generic or inclusive sense. It is intended to embrace the great and the small, the complex and the simple, the esoteric and the commonplace--all events and objects, in short, which enter into the purview of human experience conceived along its broadest lines. The electron exists, as does a galaxy of stars. The reality of the Peruvian peasant exists, as does the Reality of the world-process as a whole. The reference of the theological is to that in existence which is fundamental, creative, sustaining, preserving, and saving. Whatever refers to this dimension of any form of existence, or whatever expresses the manner in which this dynamic of existence operates, is theological in character.

This understanding of theology is similar to Paul Tillich's almost classic definition of "ultimate concern" as the object of theology:

> Our ultimate concern is that which determines our being or not-being. Only those statements are theological which deal with their objects in so far as it can become a matter of being or

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> not-being for us.[1]

If it is understood that "ultimate concern" represents an empirical judgment of fact and not a psychological state of mind, and that "being" refers to a dynamic process of activity, and that so-called "natural" processes do in fact have a great deal of relevance to one's being or not-being (and hence are matters of ultimate concern), and that the term "our" is to be taken in a social rather than individual sense, then Tillich's definition suffices for the understanding of "the theological" informing this dissertation.

The theological refers to origins and foundations, and this implies that there are theological dimensions to every activity in process. The notion of relativity demands this judgment, just as does the traditional theological notion of Creation. History, nature, and culture are all theologically alive, and in a very concrete sense the work of the historian, the sociologist, the ecologist, and the politician is filled with theological import. The difference is, perhaps, that the concern of the theologian is to point out the broader importance of these theologically charged activities, while the concern of the others is for the activities in and of themselves. In the final analysis, the concrete activity is probably more important, although awareness of the theological dimensions of common life-activities may well lead to a greater realization of value in them.

It is from this broad perspective, then, that these final two chapters are being written. The traditional "study of God"

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[1] Systematic Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), vol. I, p. 14.

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approach to theo-logy is being set aside in deference to a less traditional and more frankly experimental approach to the subject. The goal of this shift of emphasis is to unite some of the values of the theological tradition with some of the emergent insights of the modern period, as perceived in Mead. In the present chapter an attempt will be made to create the matrix of a theological world-view--to show how in this perspective the entire universe is theologically alive. Then, in the final chapter, an attempt will be made to deal with certain theological concepts from the Judao-Christian tradition within the framework or point of view created in chapter four. Both chapters are written with some apprehension, but also with the conviction that there is considerable value in such an approach. This dissertation may be described as an attempt to be theologically ecumenical in a radical sense--to include all of experience, not merely that which has traditionally been considered to be "religious," within the "house" or community of theology. Perhaps this is the office of so-called "philosophical theology." The purpose is to make a useful contribution to the continuing task of theological analysis and construction.

An Historical Configuration of the Reality Process

As Mead analyzes that which men experience as Reality, it is a dynamic procession of events, pulsating, expanding, and growing increasingly complex with the passage of time and the increasing ability of human individuals and communities to exercise control in the creation of new forms of existence. It is a Reality that has a history, a past in which it was quite different from that which it is today, and a future into which it shall emerge in forms which today are only dimly anticipated or not anticipated at all. The greatest proportion of Reality, from a temporal point of view, is hidden beyond the threshold of experience. It is known to us as a shadowy era of cosmic dust and gases, of dimly understood evolutions of novel forms and substances which must have exhibited rather sharp differences from their predecessor forms, and of the fantastic (but indisputable) emergence of existential forms exhibiting the ability to select and mold surrounding forms by the stimulus of their own inner needs. Reality in this portion of its long temporal trek to the present is known to us only as "what must have been" if we are to be able to give an accounting of what now is. It is a structure of many hypotheses, each of them changing with the passage of time, and characterized in no small measure by a primitive sense of awe and wonder.

Somewhat more can be said concerning the process of Reality after the hypothetical point is reached where the phenomenon of life has emerged. Very primitive life remains largely opaque to our investigations at this point, but its characteristics are more and more coming within the purview of our experience.. There are "residuals" to be found here--characteristics of contemporary life forms which are discovered to be generic among all living forms, and which therefore provide a basis for more informed speculation about the past. Two of these "residuals" stand out to Mead. One is the prime importance of the social or communal dimension of animate existence; the manner in which the individual form is always generated, nurtured, and sustained within a group process. The other is the way

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in which the animate community (and communities of communities) select and create from their surroundings a meaningful world or environment. This world is created out of needs inherent in the life form and a "formless" surrounding characterized by the presence of conditions adequate to the needs of the emergent animate community. The result is a perspective, a reality within Reality, within which the living form has acquired the meanings (responses) necessary to its survival.

In this interaction--perhaps "mutual creation" is a better phrase--of life form and environment, a vast number of such perspectives come into being and then pass away. The passage of time manifests quite a history of this process of mutual creation. New world perspectives are created. Both living form and environment take on emergent dimensions. The social processes characterizing the various communities of life become more and more complex. Simple communication arises--the conversation of gestures in which social functions are carried out through the use of sounds, motions, etc., which serve as signs or stimuli to definite actions within the social process in that community. Then, within the social process of certain of these communities, emerges the phenomenon of the internalization of the process of social interaction. Gestures become significant symbols, carrying the power to elicit from any individual in that community a common response. Emergent in the individual is the neural ability to inhibit the immediacy of the response, and in this inhibited state to anticipate the response of the others with whom he is involved, and thus emerges

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the ability to plan one's activity in the future. Whatever the temporal dimension of this emergent facility, it may be referred to as the birth of man.

The birth of man heralds an expansion of Reality and an acceleration of the process of Reality construction. Not only is man neurally equipped to retain the inhibited responses known as significant meanings, but upright man is also manually equipped to explore the resistances he encounters in his surroundings. Physical objects come into being as the means for man to attain his life-goals. His reality perspective grows larger, and Reality witnesses a corresponding growth. This is not simply a matter of including more of the world that is "there" within the world of meaning; it is also a matter of different men and communities of men bringing different aspects of the amorphous world into focus and form. Portions of these emergent events are communicated and thus shared, especially among the members of smaller communities and those sharing the same system of language. But in many instances the worlds or perspectives of men remain unknown, uncommunicated to one another, due to differences of geography, social culture, and language. Reality is thus expanding as various realities grow and expand, but it awaits coordination. It is not a common reality, but is, in Mead's terminology, "the total of such perspectives."[1]

The maintaining of a perspective is almost totally a social process. In so far as a perspective is shared in common by men, it is so shared because it is internalized within each individual man as an organized set of behavioral responses. Each individual within the community sharing that perspective responds to certain stimuli just as every other individual member of the community does, because his socialization within that community has provided him with the attitude of the generalized other. The attitude of the generalized other is the attitude present in every other member of the community of individuals for whom this generalized pattern of responses is a behavioral fact. The reality perspective which these individuals have is the attitude of a particular generalized other. There are many such attitudes characterizing the behavior of individuals within the several communities in which they are implicated, and they continue to do so as long as these communities remain a behavioral fact. When a given type of community passes out of existence, so also will the generalized attitude of the members of that community, but at no time is any individual without at least some of these generalized attitudes. It is the attitude of the generalized other which provides the basis of self-consciousness as well as the ability of the individual self both to survive in his social context and to make emergent contributions to the ongoing process of reality construction. Reality in the larger sense, then, must be viewed as a complex network of such generalized attitudes--attitudes which are the generic behavioral patterns obtaining in the various social groupings which together comprise the human social process as a whole. There is no appeal beyond these experiential structures. Man's Reality consists of an indefinite number of generalized others.

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[1] MT, p. 315.

The Generalized Other and the Unity of the Reality Process

Thus far the discussion does not substantially differ from what Mead has already presented us, although the line of development is perhaps somewhat different. This line of development, however, is leading toward the asking of a question with which Mead does not deal at length. That question is: may this pluralistic network of reality perspectives be considered as a unified whole, and if so, how is its unity to be understood? Is there a single process embracing all of these sub-processes, each of which only remotely reflects the whole of which it is a part?[1]

The question seeks to push beyond the additive conception of Reality as the sum total of individual perspectives. It seeks to discover a more organic type of unity, a unity which is a functional fact in the process of the becoming of Reality. Mead himself, at one point, suggests that unity is not to be accounted for in terms of mere addition.[2] He goes on to point out that unity is an achievement, the result of a selective process. It is neither a presupposition, nor a simple datum. It is the integrity of that which emerges at the closure or consummation of an act or event.[3] But this concept of unity, while it does transcend a merely additive conception, does not yet approach the problem of the unity of the whole. It merely raises the further question of whether, should the concept of the unity of the whole be validated, one may also validly refer to events involving the emergence of a new structure of Reality. That is, is there an "activity" or historical route of passage of the entire Reality process? If so, how is this process of the whole to be understood?

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[1] Mead appears to assume the unity of the process as a whole, especially in those places where he deals with the notions of evolution and emergence. See, for example, MT, pp. 164-168, 304, 361; MSS, pp. 134, 250-252; PP, p. 174.

[2] PA, p. 631.

[3] PP, pp. 173-174.

The position to be maintained here is that the answers to the questions surrounding the concept of the unity of the Reality process considered as a whole are implicit in Mead's concept of the generalized other. This concept of the generalized other represents the only means whereby Mead can account for the unity of the many in a single perspective. What is required here is the generalization of this principle, and the introduction of the concept of the Generalized Other. Mead, as previously noted, deals with the concept of "the" generalized other as a category.[1] This category is viewed as containing the indefinite number of reality perspectives or generalized others characterizing the situational structure of Reality. Each such generalized other represents a stratification of Reality that is objectively real within the limits of the social process in which it is the unifying factor, and each represents the set of conditions necessary to the perpetuation of that social process. Some of these generalized others are more inclusive than others, and subsume less inclusive generalized others within their own unity. What is here being suggested is that Mead's viewpoint is incomplete without the consideration of the Generalized Other in an all-inclusive and unitive sense. It would function, within this viewpoint, as the controlling category, being the prime exemplification of all of the fundamental aspects of Mead's metaphysical position. The Generalized Other, in other terms, is the universal of the generalized others. It is that situational structure of relations in which other existential structures are in fact implicated and to which these other structures do in fact give an essentially common response.

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[1] See above, chapter three, pp. 274-275.

The empirical character of this relational structure must be emphasized strongly. The concept of the Generalized Other is not being deductively introduced for the sake of completing an architectonic structure of Reality. A generalized other, however concrete or abstract in its make-up, is always a functioning dimension of an empirical process. It embodies the conditions and the means whereby those entities included within its limits are enabled to achieve their eventful identities and to maintain their historical routes of passage. This holds true for the Generalized Other no less than for less inclusive generalized others. If the concept has any meaning at all, this meaning will be found in the manner in which the Generalized Other is found to be a functioning dimension of the empirical processes which belong to our experience of Reality. The concept does represent a metaphysical generalization, but it is a generalization descriptive of empirical behavioral realities and having distinct empirical consequences in the ongoing process that is

Reality. The concept of the Generalized Other is descriptive of the manner in which Reality as a whole manifests consistent responses which organize and nurture the becoming of Reality in its parts, and which influence these instances of becoming in the direction of the emergence of more deeply and intensely socialized qualities.

When Mead looks at human experience of Reality, he finds both plurality and unity. The plurality he finds is attributed to the irreducible uniqueness of the activity of the human individual, who acts out of combinations of needs and perceptions found only within his own experience. This unique perspective created by the individual is regarded as a valid stratification of Reality, and embodies those "subjective" elements of experience which bring forth emergent dimensions both of that individual's reality and of Reality in its broadest social dimension. The individual perspective is that ongoing process in which the notion of relativity is most apparent in experience. Something takes place there that is duplicated nowhere else.

On the other hand, the individual is never encountered in complete isolation from groups of other such individuals. His activities and experiences are always events occurring within the context of social activity and experience. The individual is always a part of a group process and a group perception of reality. He shares in a reality perspective which involves much more than his individual reality perspective. He is one aspect of a unitive group process, and owes his very being as a self-conscious individual to his implication in that unitive group process.

This unity shared in common by many individuals is an attained configuration of behavioral responses which has emerged out of an ongoing temporal process of social interaction. It owes its being to the interaction of the many individuals encompassed within its limits. By the same token, each of the many individuals implicated in the unitive process owes his ability to be an individual to the unity which has been attained in the group process. The common elements of the social process are conditions within which the individual, with his own unique perspective, can come into being. Without the internalization of these conditions, the individual is powerless to function. He has to share in the perspective common to the others in order to play out his own creative role. If he is not a part of the common world, he will perish. The meeting of the basic vital functions depends upon entry into a world of common meanings, even if one such meaning is as elementary as responding to a source of food. Even the process of the generation of an individual is a social process.

Mead's empirical analysis of the interaction of the individual and the reality perspective or generalized other in which he becomes an individual pepresents Mead's answer to the classic philosophical question of the one and the many. Unity is the behavioral achievement of the many. It exists only in the many as they are in fact behaviorally related one to another. This unity is always antecedent to the emergence of the individual. It represents the conditions requisite for the individual to come into being. But this unity, to repeat, is always dependent upon the activity of the many. It has no other form than that which it has achieved through the social interaction of its member individuals. The one exists in the relatedness of the many, and the many exist as individuals in the unity of the one. This mutual interdependence is a concrete empirical datum in Mead's thinking.

Before extracting from this a general principle characteristic of all Reality, it is perhaps in order to note that Mead's analysis of the mutual interdependence of the many and the one entails another philosophical problem, the problem of "infinite regression." To make unity and diversity mutually interdependent is to foreclose the possibility of assigning temporal or ontological priority to either of them when dealing with the question of the origin of Being. Each is inconceivable apart from the other, and to that extent is "prior" to the other. Ultimacy, as far as the question of origins is concerned, must be assigned to a process of interaction involving both. This process may, by abstraction, be extended indefinitely into the temporal and ontological past without reaching a point of "the" origin or "the" creation where the process begins.

From the perspective of certain metaphysical systems, this characteristic of Mead's view must be looked upon as a defect. But from the perspective of a metaphysic in which such notions as relativity, emergence, and activity are fundamental notions--metaphysics in which Becoming is ultimately a more fundamental category than Being--the notion of infinite regression is simply a datum to be accepted. If the process of creation is perceived to have a particular point of origin in a Being upon which all other forms ultimately depend for their own existence, then one is in a new metaphysical ballpark in which the ground rules are quite different. The question of infinite regression involves the comparability of basic metaphysical principles, principles which are so fundamental that they are accepted as a matter of course. Such principles probably cannot be argued, for they are presupposed by one's method of argumentation. They may be discussed and clarified, but the differing logics inherent in the alternative viewpoints represented foreclose the possibility of "proving" the correctness of one view as opposed to another. Any metaphysic in which the process of Becoming is seen to be more fundamental than the phenomenon of Being would seem to involve an infinite regression; and conversely, this must appear suspect in any metaphysic in which Being is ultimately more fundamental than the phenomenon of Becoming.

Returning to the question of the unity of Reality, the assertion has been made that the dynamics of the one and the many in Mead's notion of the generalized other provide a model for the understanding of Reality as one--as the Generalized Other. The individual comes into being and is maintained in his existence solely by virtue of the communities into which he is born. These communities are functionally unitive entities consisting of the common behavioral responses of the many individuals comprising them. The unity of the generalized other exists only in the responses of its members, and conversely, the individual member exists only because of the consistent responses of the other in its generalized dimensions. The metaphysical principle (generic trait of existence) implicit in this relationship is that individuality presupposes membership in an organized community. It is only due to the fact that the many are organized in a certain fashion that the individual form comes into being. The existence of the individual form also implies the existence of a related organization of other individual forms.

Pressing the model somewhat further, a generalized other is the behavioral unity of a community of indefinite dimensions. It is that which functions in common at a particular level of abstraction, ranging from communities in which concrete immediacy is readily apparent (family, athletic team, school class) to communities in which the common element, while thoroughly functional, is so generic as to be hidden from immediate view (the middle class, speakers of the English language, human beings). At levels of higher abstraction, each more concrete generalized other may also be viewed as an "individual" other that is part of an organized interactional pattern of broader dimensions. Thus, not only is the existence of the individual form dependent upon the existence of an organized community of other individual forms, but the coexistence of several such organized communities is dependent upon their organization in a community of more abstract behavioral dimensions. If this is a generic trait of existence, as is here suggested, at the limit of human experience one is confronted by the notion of the Generalized Other--that common system of relational dynamics within which all generalized others of less abstract dimensions maintain the processes of their becoming. A pluralism of reality perspectives is able to maintain itself because the individual social perspectives in the pluralism share a set of common responses in a larger social process--the Generalized Other.

The Inclusive Scope of the Concept of "the" Generalized Other

Mead's notion of the generalized other is grounded in his analysis of human becoming, and is treated mostly as the social dimension of the mind and the self, both largely linguistic phenomena. This has tended to obscure the fact that the notion has implications which transcend the realm of the specifically personal. The generalized other represents the whole world--nature and history--in so far as the world is a meaningful part of human experience.[1] The socialization of the human individual is into a meaningful environment, not into an ethereal community of disembodied selves. Human community, while marked by some unique characteristics, is still very much a natural phenomenon. There is no way, in Mead's view, to separate man from the surroundings in which both he and his environment are mutually creative of one another. The generalized other is an organized system of the interrelationships of the living and the non-living.

To place the matter in another context, the generalized other is in many respects an ecological concept. The term "ecology," derived from the greek term oikos (house), refers to the study of the relationships of the living organism and his "house" or environment. It is, to use Marston Bates' happy phrase, "skin-out-biology."[2] A fundamental ecological principle is that the phenomenon of life is inescapably social in character. As Bates puts the matter:

> The basic unit of life in ecology, then, is the individual organism. But individuals never occur in isolation in nature, and they can be kept in isolation in the laboratory only temporarily and with difficulty.[3] (Italics mine.)

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[1] See above, chapter three, pp. 278-279.

[2] "Ecology and Evolution," Evolution after Darwin, ed. by Sol Tax (3 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), I, 549.

[3] Bates, "Ecology and Evolution," p. 549.

And again:

> Always, organism and environment are interacting systems, not contrasts.[1]

Life exists only in populations of living entities, and these populations themselves exist only in complex communities of populations--communities involving systematic relationships among both living and non-living entities. Isolation of particular ecological systems, and even of individual organisms, lies within the grasp both of abstract thought and laboratory technique. But complete understanding of the system or organism thus isolated invariably necessitates study of the social and environmental relationships of the system or organism in question. Events occurring in meadow, forest, and pond are not at all unrelated to one another. The continuous biosphere is characterized by a number of modal points which are readily identifiable as centers of relatively differing communal systems, but the boundaries between these modal points are indistinct, and in very concrete ways each is dependent upon the others for its survival.[2] Of equal importance, each of these interdependent modal points in the continuous biosphere is comprised of living organisms and non-living environments in inseparable relationship.

This organized sociality of living organisms and their environments--their functional interdependence--is a phenomenon very similar to that which Mead describes in terms of the generalized other. An individual generalized other or reality perspective corresponds in Mead's thinking to the ecological concept of the community or modal point in the continuous biosphere. Mead and the ecologists are looking at the same type of social interdependence of the living form and its environment, and at the same kind of abstraction of real functioning units which, from a broader perspective, are but portions of a larger process in which they are implicated. Implicit in both points of view is the principle that individuals and communal processes of more limited dimensions are dependent in their existence upon organized communal processes of more inclusive dimensions. These more inclusive processes exhibit generic functional characteristics--organizational structures--which are the conditions within which less inclusive processes do in fact function. No process can maintain its existence if it cannot adjust to these conditions. Conversely, these generic traits which characterize larger ecological systems have no existence other than that which they have as they function in the various sub-systems so related in the larger system.

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[1] Bates, "Ecology and Evolution," p. 553.

[2] Bates, "Ecology and Evolution," p. 551.

An identifiable ecological system consists of individuals, populations, or even communities related in a particular kind of interactive pattern. This is precisely the character of a generalized other. More general communities are discerned as they function within communities of less generality, just as more abstract generalized others are discerned in the activities of more concrete generalized others. At the highest level of abstraction, where one is speaking of the whole "house," one discovers a process which exists solely in its functions in less generic processes, but which nevertheless creates and nurtures these processes. This is the Generalized Other, that "ecological system" which embraces all other such systems. It is the many, the multitude

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of mutually creative living forms and their environments, viewed in those aspects in which they function as one. It is the structure of the Reality process at a given moment in time, as the events which are taking place cohere in generic behavioral patterns.

The question must be raised whether this notion of Reality organized in functional patterns is applicable to those hypothetical periods of pre-history prior to the emergence of language-speaking man. It seems clear, for example, that the term "generalized" is being strained when applied to a lifeless world of physical energy or a world of living organisms which do not manifest the mechanism of symbolic generalization. However, this is only an apparent difficulty. What is taking place in this chapter is the generalization of a particular concept in social psychology into a metaphysical category of quite abstract dimensions. It is true that, in Mead's treatment, the notion of the generalized other is descriptive of the behavior and experience of human beings who, through the use of language, have the ability to inhibit responses and to direct their attention to common elements in the world they encounter. But this is not the generalizable aspect of the notion of the generalized other. The real force of the notion--and that aspect of it which is generalizable--is that the other which the human individual generalizes is in fact an empirical social process which is concretely there to be experienced. This concrete social process is a meaningful reality before it enters into the significant meanings of language. It is the life-life and life-environment behavioral pattern to which the generalized other refers that is ultimately important. This is

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not to play down the importance of the symbolization of this pattern in language. Man's position of control in the evolutionary process is largely owed to such symbolization. But the point is that if the common responses are not empirically being made in the social process, there is in fact no aspect of the other that is generalizable.

One may thus conclude that, in so far as the mutually creative relationship of living organism to its environment and to other living organisms is characterized by common behavioral responses or meanings, the notion of the Generalized Other is applicable to those prehistoric epochs in which life was present. The various populations and communities of living organisms did in fact achieve organized patterns of relationships which provided for their survival and continuing emergence into differing individual forms and communal relationships. Such common social patterns are the empirical presupposition of our own existence as human beings. This evolutionary phenomenon is reconstructed on the basis of evidence interpreted from a present point of view, and the passage of time may witness the emergence of new insights into the means by which these patterns emerged and maintained themselves. The present nevertheless remains inexplicable apart from the hypothesis that some such process has taken place in the past.

Much the same may be affirmed concerning the prehistoric epochs preceding those in which living organisms are found, although here one is confronted by a situation much more dissimilar to human experience. Man and the "lower" animals share the characteristic of selecting and organizing environments which are meaningful. For both man and lower animals, the act is the unit of existence, and the act takes place within the context of a meaningful social perspective. The meaningful world of the brontosaurus is quite different from the significantly meaningful world of man, but these worlds are similar in so far as both are the creation of organisms which select environments upon which they confer certain sentient characteristics. The brontosaurus and the man are percipient events which stratify nature in consentient sets in which various objects acquire meaning in the course of the completion of the act. The world and the objects included within it thus attain their reality as the experience or field of conduct of various forms of life. The identity of any object or structure of objects is dependent upon its position in the act--usually a social act--that is going on. There are no environments apart from the activities of living things.

The difficulty is that of finding in inanimate existence something analogous to animate activity in which something analogous to a meaningful world may arise. Sentience and selection, and therefore structure, would seem to be absent in these early periods of the evolutionary process. Mead voices this opinion.[1] If there are no living creatures to confer meanings, there is no consentience and no identifiable physical object.[2] The scientific discovery of relativity and the theory of matter as energy preclude a treatment of space and time as the ultimate dimensions of a world that is there in an absolute sense.[3] Space and time do not add up to an environment.[4] Space and time are dimensions of reality, but only of the reality within which they are coemergent with the activities of living forms. Time and space are selected systems of reality, and what time and what space they are depends upon the social activities in which they emerge as time and space. The best that lies open to us with respect to the prehistoric, inanimate past is a hypothetical reconstruction of that past on the basis of what is going on in the present, with no pretension of finality attached.[1]

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[1] Mead's reluctance to extend his thinking into pre-animate history is discussed above, chapter one, pp. 152-154.

[2] PA, p. 350. [3] PP, pp. 43-45. [4] PP, p. 42.

Mead himself lets the matter drop at this point, but there are aspects of his thinking concerning the present which lend themselves to the making of hypotheses concerning the pre-animate past. He speaks, for example, of the "intelligence" of nature in the sense that the world of physical objects in which we live makes certain predictable responses to our actions upon it--responses with which men may cooperate in the course of such activities as building a bridge or flying an airplane.[2] Elsewhere he speaks of such responses as "resistances," and points out that the resistances offered by physical things are actually a type of action.[3] The resistance of the stone to our touch reveals the "inside" of the stone every bit as much as the act of grasping the stone reveals the "inside" of the one who grasps it. The stone acts in response to our own action, and to the extent that it does offer this type of resistance it either cooperates with or obstructs what is going on at the time. The offering of such resistance may be said to characterize the

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[1] PP, pp. 45-46. [2] MSS, p. 185.

[3] See above, chapter one, pp. 124-125.

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pre-animate world which we postulate from a present conceptual point of view, even if such a world were incapable of stratification into the perceptual forms in which it is today known to men, and presumably to other living organisms as well. That world, however amorphous, was a "pushy" world.

The presence in the pre-animate world of the act of resistance implies the possibility of emergence of meaning and structure. All that is entailed in a rudimentary notion of meaning is that resistance in a contact field takes place in a persistent pattern of response. In this way of looking at things, every energy transformation or physical action-reaction is meaningful if it consistently occurs under the same conditions. Scientists, generalizing from current experience of the physical world, base their theories of inorganic evolution upon the assumption of the emergence of such meaningful functional patterns. Such a meaningful pattern may be viewed as a type of structure which, although quite clearly differing from the biological notion of an environment, is at least similar in some respects to an environment. It represents a type of organization in the passage of events within which definition or thinghood can emerge. It is a process within which a type of selection can take place. The term "selection" here may refer to no more than the occurrence of random energy transformations, but random contact is at least analogous to biological selection. The random interaction of energy particles or social energy systems results in an event's expressing whatever individuality inheres in the various factors involved in the interaction, and this is the type of situation in which emergence occurs.

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Just what energy particles and social energy systems and emergent structures are being discussed is a matter of present conjecture, and in this sense the description of the concrete pre-animate past "as it actually was" is as emergent as the future. But that some such process as is being abstractly described has taken place concretely in the past seems to be an assumption that is consistent with descriptive analysis of processes which come more directly within the scope of experience. At the very least, there appears to be no compelling reason which would preclude application of the notions in question to this past realm. The absence of negating evidence signifies that a notion is one that may legitimately be entertained, and attention is then shifted to judgments concerning the use of the notion and how helpful it is to use it in a given manner.

The suggestion is that Reality may be viewed in terms of an evolving process of emerging events characterized both by continuity and discontinuity and by unity and plurality. Whatever unity is manifested by this process is an organized pattern of responses which emerges in the concrete activities of the pluralistic elements of which this unity is composed. The unity of Reality resides in plurality as plurality does in fact function in an organized manner, and this unity provides the set of conditions within which further stages of the process, however novel, are nurtured, and to which these further stages must in fact conform. The emergence and survival of individual forms is dependent upon the presence of such a functional social structuring of events. The shape of this structure changes with the passage of events, but some such continuing structure is the empirical prerequisite of the continuation of the Reality process in its more pluralistic or individualized aspects. The discontinuous or emergent dimensions of Reality come into being in concert with these continuing dimensions, and when this occurs there are coemergent changes in the configuration of the whole. Reality is a dialogic process of interaction with a history of increasing and diminishing degrees of socialization, but never devoid of this social dimension. It is always the Other in its generalized or organized functional pattern that enables the Reality process to continue.

The Generalized Other and Disunity or Chaos

The Generalized Other is the historical route of passage taken by the process of Reality in so far as the individual entities and societies of individual entities comprising the Reality process do in fact function in a coordinated fashion. It is an emerging network of relationships which responds to the past, secures the present, and provides the requisite structure for the creation of the future. But as a "generalized" behavioral phenomenon, it is descriptive only of certain aspects of Reality, i.e., of those aspects of Reality which do in fact exhibit the organized responses of which the Generalized Other consists. Within the social processes exhibiting these common responses are also to be found events which do not in all aspects reflect this unity. This is even more noticeably the case with respect to the activities of individuals. What occurs at individual and less generalized levels of existence may not be entirely congruent with what is occurring in broader perspective. The unity of the Generalized Other is a unity that has been achieved from processes in which a lesser degree of unity was operating, and is emerging into a future in which the degree of unity it will have is being determined in the interaction of the present. The activities of the many, while exhibiting a certain unified structure, are not homogenously compatible with one another. Disunity--perhaps even the destruction of unity--is as characteristic of the Reality process as its unity.

This phenomenon warrants close scrutiny, as it appears to be in tension with the thesis that a functionally unified structure of events is both an empirical fact and the prerequisite of the existence of the individual and social activities comprising the Reality process as a whole. One might well assume that the concept of unity is not subdividable into degrees. But in actual experience this is not the case. An example may be helpful. Consider a relatively simple social process, the playing of a baseball game. There is a certain emergent unity that characterizes baseball. A long social process has eventuated in the development of certain rules, techniques, strategies, equipment, and players which, taken as a whole, comprise the game of baseball. Each individual player has internalized the game so that he sees himself in terms of the entire complex situation. He fulfills his own role within that structure of predictable responses. Nevertheless, during the course of any given game certain events take place which do not reflect the unity of the process known as baseball. Individual players may make errors of judgment, such as throwing to the wrong base or forgetting how many outs there are. Equipment may fail, such as when a bat breaks upon its impact with the ball. Pitchers may violate the rules by putting a substance on the ball which makes it more difficult to hit. Managers may make decisions of strategy which are inappropriate to what is going on at the time. Any number of events may occur during the course of a baseball game which represent unpredictable factors that do not in fact reflect the unity of playing baseball. Yet the game of baseball is not thereby destroyed. The unity of the game is tolerant of a certain amount of conflict and relatively chaotic playing. Unity is an overall behavioral result, and does not necessarily entail every individual phase of the game process being perfectly congruent with the process as a whole.

The social process of electing a national president affords another example. This is a process which involves a great number of social sub-processes and acts on the part of individuals. Considered as a whole, it is the orderly process of electing an official. It is consummated in the selection of one person to be that official, and it is known as that unity called "the election." But considered in its component parts it is anything but a unity. Different individuals and groups have differing platforms and campaign strategies, and these are often at cross purposes with one another. There is emotionalism, name-calling, conspiracy, treachery, and dishonesty. Public opinion is molded by sophisticated usage of mass media, decisions are made behind closed doors, not all the eligible population actually votes, and yet the election is held and the end result is the election of a president and the whole affair is called the orderly process of democracy at work. That is exactly what it is. For all of its incongruities and chaotic elements, this process manifests in practice a definite unitive structure. It may be analyzed in terms of its deficiencies and improvements may be prescribed, but it is still the election, the functional process within which all the other events occur and which is tolerant of these events even when they tend to stifle the elective process rather than further it.

The point is that the unity of Reality is the unity of a process, and individual phases of a process may reflect the unity of the process as a whole to a greater or lesser extent. It is a matter of social organization, and that is definitely a matter of degree. A poorly played ballgame and a poorly run campaign are still unitive processes, but they are not as coordinated as they might be. The goal is to have each phase of the process reflect the goal of the process as a whole, but this is rarely achieved in practice. Usually an empirically functional unity characterizes what is going on, but this unity is tolerant of all sorts of errors and irrelevant events.

This does not negate the role of functional structure in providing the conditions of becoming for those events included within a given process. The self, for example, cannot exist apart from a certain social structure. Nevertheless, the self which is sustained by that structure may engage in activities which are so a-social as to be destructive of that same structure. The inept baseball player may make a mockery of the game by his performance, but he has no being as a baseball player apart from the game which he inadvertently mocks. The social organization of a process, in other words, is not complete. The process does provide enough structure to sustain the events which occur within it, but some of these events may only remotely sustain the process as a whole, or perhaps not at all.

The unity of the Generalized Other or the process of Reality is of this character. The historical route of the Generalized Other in its becoming reveals varying stages of organization. In the early stages of the process, in those hypothetical eons in which the earth was perhaps nothing more than a cloud of gases and cosmic dust, the Generalized Other may have represented only minimal order in a quite chaotic complex of events. But there must have been a certain degree of organization which was the context of the emergence of increasingly socialized structures of existence. With the occurrence of such emergence, the Generalized Other itself attains an emergent configuration. The process continues, and is marked by the emergence of still more socialized existential structures, which in turn have a reciprocal effect upon the organization of the whole. The process of Reality at any given point in its history is a network of relationships manifesting a greater or lesser degree of order, depending upon what is going on at that juncture. Whatever occurs, however, is conditioned by the orderly structure that is there.

The responsiveness of the future to the present situation in which it is born, which is another way of stating the dependence of the many upon the many-as-related or the Generalized Other, is what is meant by the term "causality." Causality is the structure of the past which is carried forward in the passage of the Generalized Other.[1] The influence of this causality is not total, however. The evolution of the Generalized Other is not the unfolding of a programmed series of events. Certain events occur which create emergent relationships to their pasts, and these emergent relationships may represent either an increased or a diminished degree of socialization. If the structure of the Generalized Other takes a certain course in its becoming, these events may mark the origins of routes of passage which cannot be sustained in their becoming, and which eventually pass out of existence altogether. The study of biological evolution, for example, reveals countless instances in which a certain evolutionary strain simply dwindles away into extinction. This represents, in the terms of the metaphysic being developed here, a failure of socialization. The occurrence of such failures does not preclude the accrual of value to the Generalized Other as a result of the short-lived histories of these entities. Nor does it represent the occurrence of events which are unrelated to the structure of the Generalized Other, and thus a falsification of the principle that the individual presupposes a social context. Such events occur within a context of relationships which conditions their becoming. The Generalized Other does sustain their existence for a time, and is responsive to them during that time, even though subsequently they are not so sustained and pass out of existence. The Generalized Other does not exercise complete control over that which takes place within its parts and which takes place, at least partially, by its own causal agency.

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[1] See above, chapter one, pp. 55-59, 83-97.

This is a point to be emphasized. The passage of Reality, and of the Generalized Other which is its unity, is a history marked by setbacks and losses. It may be described in terms of a cosmic struggle for existence in which the possibility of failure always lies close at hand. There seems to be a pattern of increasing socialization in this struggle, but it is an uneven pattern which is subject to frustration and reversal. If the Generalized Other were a sentient being with the emotions and purposes of men, one might say that it is struggling to realize itself, and that it suffers pain and loss along the way. The Generalized Other is a powerful force in the becoming of Reality, but it is not an omnipotent force. Dependent upon events which it influences but does not control, it must conduct its struggle in terms of enticement rather than of coercion. It seeks a degree of unity in the process of Reality which it has not yet attained. It sustains the Reality of the present, but strains forward to what present Reality might become. Its only means in this struggle are the activities of those entities sustained within its structure, and over these it does not have complete control. The emerging shape of the many-as-related depends equally upon the responses of the many in their individuality.

To state the limits of the Generalized Other in this fashion may appear to be setting up a kind of metaphysical dualism in which Reality is the battlefield of the conflicting forces of socialization

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and chaos or of good and evil. Closer scrutiny reveals that this is not the case. The occurrence of events which fall outside the structure of the Generalized Other or which diminish the degree of organization reflected in the Generalized Other in its subsequent phases may well be dealt with in terms of the occurrence of evil. In this sense only one may speak of the reality of evil. It is something which does in fact occur within the process of Reality, and which may occur at any given point in the process. But this is merely to state in a descriptive way an experienced dimension of becoming. It is not to postulate the existence of a universal condition which always and everywhere opposes the Generalized Other in its socializing activity. Evil, in this understanding, is something which may characterize any event, but which may also be missing as an element of any event. It is not a predictable dimension of becoming in any sense other than that it is always a possibility and that the process of socialization always has a subsequent phase into which it may emerge. The Generalized Other conditions becoming, but it does not control becoming absolutely. Evil is the possibility attendant upon the reality of emergence. Where there is discontinuity, as there is in emergent events, the discontinuity may reflect either a more complete degree of socialization or a less complete degree of socialization. There is no predictable power of evil. There is only the evil which emerges in a given situation. The unpredictable discontinuity characteristic of an emergent event is neither good nor evil, social nor anti-social, in itself. Such judgments are only a posteriori descriptions of what has taken place in comparison with what might have taken place. They presuppose an ethic in which the socializing direction of the Generalized Other is the highest value, but in which the concrete form of this value is determined within the limiting context of an emerging situation.

To summarize, the Generalized Other is always an emergent level of unity or organization prevailing at a given point in the ongoing process of Reality. It represents the cohesiveness of Reality in its present, and Reality's possibility of further coordination and integration in the immediate future. As a complex network of functioning relationships, the Generalized Other influences the direction that will be taken in the continuing creation of emergent realities, but it possesses no coercive power over this process of becoming. In its own responsiveness to what is concretely occurring, the Generalized Other may undergo a setback in the level of organization which it represents, and thus a loss of organizing power for subsequent futures. The history of the Generalized Other is the history of a cosmic struggle toward more complete integration of Reality, and the outcome of this struggle is always in the future, and therefore unknown.

The Activity of the Generalized Other

The Generalized Other exists in the responses of the many in so far as these responses are universal. Apart from these activities of the many, there is no Generalized Other at all. Thus, while it would be inappropriate to apply the term "living" to the Generalized Other, as though it were some sort of biological super-specimen, the term "active" quite accurately characterizes the type of structure that it is. The Generalized Other is active in an eminent sense, being comprised of all the ordered activities of those entities which exist within the framework it provides. In these activities of the many, it maintains the existence of the many in their functional relationships one to another. It is within these functional relationships or situations that the many achieve and maintain their identity as discrete things. The Generalized Other is at all times "there" structuring the configuration of the Reality process in any hypothetical moment of its passage. The Generalized Other _is_ the complex set of relationships--the _active_ set of relationships--which enables the realities of which Reality is composed to be what they are.

Putting the matter in a slightly different perspective, the Generalized Other is an active causal agency in the process of becoming which Reality is. The Generalized Other is a predictable set of responses to which all future events, however characterized by novelty, must offer their own reciprocal responses. The conditions of becoming are "there" in a definite organized pattern of activity which controls to a great extent the shape of the emerging future. The Generalized Other "selects" the future, in a manner analogous to the way in which a living organism selects its environment, by providing a set of limits within which the immediate future must occur. The creation of Reality is a process of interaction--the interaction of the causal past (the activity of the Generalized Other) and the causal future (the activity of a less generalized other or of an individual entity) in the emerging present. To the extent that the Generalized Other does as a matter of empirical fact contribute to the causal complex or situation out of which the future emerges, it may be described as actively creative of Reality.

The Generalized Other is also "passively" related to the future, in so far as novelty and emergence are characteristic of the passage of Reality. This dimension of becoming has been noted in the previous section, and was there described in terms of the limits of the Generalized Other. These limits represent the possibility of the occurrence both of good and of evil, as evaluated by a standard of socialization, and are the empirical basis for the rather anthropomorphic description of the activity of the Generalized Other as a "struggle" to achieve more integrated levels of sociality in the ongoing process of Reality construction.[1] The Generalized Other is empirically dependent, in this struggle, upon factors in the process of becoming which transcend its own power to control the form of the onrushing future. The future being of the Generalized Other--that organized structure of relationships which will emerge in the activities of the individual entities and concrete social processes--will achieve its configuration in response to the activities of the many in their individuality. The Generalized Other always stands in this "passive" relation to its future. It would be far wide of the mark, however, to describe the Generalized Other as a merely passive or consequent structure on the basis of this dynamic. The passive element is real; the Generalized Other does continually attain redefinition in response to the novel acts of

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[1] See above, pp. 317-321.

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individuals and sub-groups. But the Generalized Other also stimulates or calls forth the occurrence of such novel activity, and not merely through the causal efficacy of its past.

The causal efficacy of the Generalized Other arising from its past achievements is not irrelevant to the emergence of the future. The Generalized Other selects and controls what it shall become in the future through providing a set of empirical conditions to which future Reality, in whatever form it emerges, must conform. This represents a vast amount of control, but it is essentially a conservative function in the process of Reality-creation. It is bound to the past, whereas Reality-creation in its innovative dimensions belongs to the future. The point which must be stressed is that the Generalized Other is in the future as well. It is ahead of its own achievements temporally, from which point it acts as an enticement to increased socialization in the novel responses of the individual many. The Generalized Other is creative of new order as well as conservative of the order it has already attained.

The temporal transcendence of the Generalized Other coincides with the emergence of language, for it is by means of significant symbols that creative possibilities are thrust into the future, from whence they may actively influence what emerges in the present. Possibilities, as a plurality of events which might take place within a given set of conditions, are characteristic of the Reality process at all stages of its development. They are the openness of the future, the element of discontinuity with the causal past, and the mystery of the emergent event. The possibilities which attend the Reality process in its more primitive stages are only assumed, however, because only one possibility emerges into concretion or actuality, and this emergence is viewed only in retrospect. The reality of alternatives in the past is not thereby denied, but what alternatives they may have been is hidden from experience. The Generalized Other, in these primitive epochs of the past, controls which possibility emerges into actuality only in so far as it provides the situation in which all the real possibilities arise. Every social achievement or discrete phase of the Reality process opens up new possibilities for the future. Achievements and alternatives go hand in hand; the ends attained in a process become means to further development. But which further development will occur is almost totally a function of chance or biological selectivity prior to the emergence of living forms who are able to use language. Possibilities become experienced and known when, through the mechanism of language, they are tested as future alternatives in the present created in the human mind. When human experience is thus cast into the future by means of symbols, the Generalized Other is itself cast into the future, to the precise extent to which it is reflected in the universality of the symbols of language.

The symbols of language, standing in the place of the organized social responses of a defined group of individuals who are mutually implicated in a common social process, represent the reality of various social perspectives. These symbols are universals. They open up the reality which they symbolize to the participation of anyone who has the mentality requisite for linguistic behavior. Some of the realities thus symbolized are of narrowly restricted social dimensions; others are more broadly social or inclusive. Mead distinguishes between the two in terms of more concrete and more abstract generalized others.[1] Social relations in the former class are more direct, while in the latter class they are more indirect. Both types of social process are empirically functioning within the Reality process as a whole, but the immediacy of the concrete club or company does tend to obscure the manner in which one is also a member of an equally functional group such as the human community at large. Thus it is that the Generalized Other, as a system of functioning relationships including the other systems but more abstract than any of them, must "struggle" to actualize the more enriched or intensified social relationships which, by virtue of its functioning structure, it holds forth as possibilities.

The structure of the human self and the tools of human thought are the gifts of the various social processes in which the self emerges. The attitudes and values of the self are those which it inherits from its surroundings. If the emerging self internalizes only the symbols of a narrow reference group, it will itself reflect the narrow attitudes and values of that group. By more abstract standards, such a self would be "unsocialized," even though completely socialized in terms of its own immediate environment. Such failures of socialization are broadly characteristic of human becoming, and result in the establishment of barriers to communication and social intercourse. The consequences of such barriers are lack of understanding, fragmentation of meaning, waste, destruction of the physical environment, war, and an overall impoverishment of the quality of human existence. The order represented by the Generalized Other along broad lines is often sadly deficient in quality and intensity when more concrete social groupings are considered.

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[1] See above, chapter three, pp. 264-266.

Neither the self nor the Generalized Other is imprisoned within this state of affairs. The self may transcend the narrowness of its past by viewing itself in terms of a more socialized reality structure--a more abstract generalized other.[1] Such a more abstract reality structure is available to the self in the universality of the language it speaks. Linguistic behavior opens up the possibility of communication that transcends all barriers. This possibility Mead assigns to what he terms the logical universe of discourse, as the most abstract and extensive system of social relations that is conceivable to man.[2] It is assigned in this dissertation to the Generalized Other, as representing both the functioning system of social relations which is the ultimate existential referent of logical universals, and the possibility of the emergence of hitherto unknown qualities of social existence. The symbols of language bring the resources of more socialized realities to the aid of the individual, who may draw upon them in order to construct his future in terms of the possibilities they represent. To the extent that the universality of the Generalized Other is reflected in the social processes symbolized in language, one may state that the Generalized Other is temporally ahead of the reality processes it organizes. The abstract sociality of the Generalized Other comes to the thoughts of individual selves and social sub-groups from the future, and from the future lures these individual groups to the creation of more socialized existential structures. The actual response of the individual cannot totally be predicted or controlled, but this response is influenced by the Generalized Other in the direction of conserving achieved levels of socialized existence and of creating emergent societies in which communication and participation are more fully actualized. In this manner the Generalized Other struggles to actualize its own existential possibilities, which are coincident with the possibilities of the individuals and social processes which the Generalized Other helps create and support.

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[1] See above, chapter three, pp. 266-270.

[2] MSS, pp. 156-158. See also chapter three, p. 268.

The Generalized Other is a socializing process. The means utilized by the Generalized Other in its project of socialization are the actual individuals and objects and social processes which comprise Reality considered as a whole. The Generalized Other is an integral aspect of these reality structures. It is encountered as a plurality of objective social responses which are more or less predictable and which are functional units in a highly complex system of relationships which, though at times manifesting symptoms of disintegration and chaos, serves to unify the parts of which it is composed. The Generalized Other is ingredient in every individual and social reality, for it embodies the conditions in which every reality has emerged. Not every such reality fully realizes the quality of social relatedness which, because of the social achievements of the Generalized Other, is its possibility. Nevertheless, every such reality is in fact responsive to the socializing activity of the Generalized Other, and is continually confronted by possibilities of becoming more fully integrated into the process as a whole.

The Generalized Other, as a social achievement, is conservatively "in" every social process. As social possibility, the Generalized Other is also creatively "ahead" of every social process which is controlled by the activity of Homo Loquens. At the present stage of the evolutionary process, this includes all of experienced reality. The Generalized Other is a partner in the dialogic process of thought. To what degree it is such a partner is dependent upon the individuality of the thinker, but it is always there in the universality of the symbols of thought. The realities that emerge as a result of self-conscious human activities are therefore the conjoint creations of individuals and the Generalized Other. Reality as a whole is an arena in which the many in their individuality interact with the many in their unity, and the result is the dynamic, pulsating, growing world in which we live. This world is given configuration, sustenance and direction by the activity of the Generalized Other.

The Theological Character of the Activity of the Generalized Other

The Generalized Other, however abstract in its make-up when viewed in an hypothetically arrested moment of its passage, is primarily an empirical dimension of the events comprising Reality. It is not an entity that is transcendentally removed from the arena of becoming. Quite to the contrary, the Generalized Other is encountered as an active participating force in every concrete instance of reality construction. It is universally functional as a causal agency in the conservation and creation of social existence. Its causal agency belongs to a complex causal field in which there are other factors transcending its own powers of control, but no such field escapes its influence entirely. The Generalized Other is actively ingredient throughout the Reality process. The limits of its omnipresence are marked only by the limits of human experience, which from a behavioral point of view is the equivalent of the absence of limits. One cannot speak of that which transcends one's experience absolutely.

The activity of the Generalized Other is so much a part of concrete human experience that its presence is easily overlooked. More noticeable, since it marks the passing of one world and the necessity to construct another, is the occurrence of a breakdown in organization or sociality. Such a breakdown throws the organized structure sustained by the Generalized Other into question. The security arising from a comfortable, habitual world is replaced by the insecurity of a world in which certain elements are out of place. This dramatic state of affairs tends to obscure the fact that most of the order provided by the Generalized Other remains intact, and that the power of the Generalized Other is applied to the recreation of the situation so that the disjunctive elements may be accommodated. The activity of the Generalized Other is reflected, at least to some degree, in every human undertaking involving the symbolization of social processes lying in the past. To the extent that men communicate with one another by means of language, and reflectively consider future alternatives in their minds, the Generalized Other is a present dimension in the process of reality construction. The activity of the Generalized Other is as immanent and close to human experience as the basic attitudes and values comprising one's experience of oneself, and is as convenient to human activity as the symbols men utilized as a means toward making their world receptive to the consummation of the social activities in which they are involved.

It has been noted in chapter one that the ontogenetic notion of activity describes the matrix in which relative, evolving, emergent reality is integrated.[1] The compresence of the active Generalized Other in the activities of other existential forms illustrates the manner in which the concept of the Generalized Other exemplifies the ontogenetic principles informing both Mead's thinking and the writing of this dissertation. The Generalized Other is there in the concrete events from which the notions of activity, evolution, emergence, and relativity have been abstracted. It is in these events that the Generalized Other evolves into emergent configurations as it responds to those elements in these situations which transcend its control--elements which it nevertheless integrates into its emerging novel form. It is concrete Reality itself which evolves and emerges out of situations being integrated in the process of activity, and the Generalized Other is the unity of this Reality. The abstract ontogenetic notions do not explain the Generalized Other; the Generalized Other in its compresence with the many explains the ontogenetic notions. They describe what is concretely occurring in conjunction with the conservative and stimulatingly creative power of the Generalized Other.

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[1] See above, chapter one, pp. 113, 158.

The Generalized Other is the integrating, socializing power within the dynamic, throbbing process that is experienced as Reality. The history of the Generalized Other is the history of the emergent evolution of more highly socialized existential forms. This history is marked by a continuing struggle against chaotic and disintegrative factors, but it is nevertheless a history of increasing sociality. It has eventuated, in its present phase, in the emergence of _Homo Loquens_. Language-speaking man is the social entity par excellence, for through the use of his symbols man may exist simultaneously in an indefinite number of past, present, and future reality perspectives. The Generalized Other is quite literally "at work" in the linguistic behavior of the human community, extending its control over the Reality-process and persuasively leading the members of that community toward new forms of social communion. The future of the Generalized Other, of man, and of all that is embraced in the notion of Reality, is the same future. Man and the Generalized Other are the mutual means of

Reality construction.

"The theological" has to do with that which is foundational, creative, sustaining, preserving, and saving. It is of little behavioral importance that the notion of the Generalized Other can be described solely in terms of the world of human experience. It is still that active power in the universe upon which our own existence as human beings is behaviorally and totally dependent. The Generalized Other lies at the base of the fact of our existence, the quality of our existence, and the future of our existence. It is implicated at all points of our experience as that system of active relationships without which we would cease to be. It is not an entity to be seen or grasped or brought under our control, for its unity is greater than that of its members. It is a power that expresses itself in the midst of our common experience in ways which often escape our notice. No element of human experience and activity is beyond the sphere of its influence. All of Reality is responsively alive to its activity, which means, to borrow a phrase, that the ground upon which we walk is truly holy ground.[1] From a functional or behavioral point of view, the Generalized Other is the divine element in human existence.

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[1] Exodus 3:5.

CHAPTER V

A THEOLOGY OF EMERGENCE: AN OUTLINE OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE REINTERPRETED AS A DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY OF THE GENERALIZED OTHER

A Statement of Theological Posture

The position taken here is that there is within the Reality process an ultimate source of human becoming, human experience, and human well-being. This source is as near to a human being as the very structure of the self. It is so close that it may remain hidden amid the ordinary operations of day-to-day living. Yet at the same time it bestows upon the individual human self his understanding of himself and the world in which he lives. It is ingredient to some extent in his every thought and activity. The human problem is that of calling attention to this ultimate source of meaning, and of enriching the qualities of human existence thereby.

This is an essentially religious problem.[1] Whatever concrete form it may assume as individuals and communities of individuals attempt its solution, it represents the attitude of aligning one's own existence with an ultimate source of personal strength and security, however that source may be conceptualized or mythologized. This is a common denominator of religious practice--the attempt to establish oneself in relationship to that power or state of affairs which lies at the base of Reality. This view of religion, stated dynamically rather than structurally, suggests that the phenomenon of "religious" activity embraces far more of human existence than those activities connected with institutions and other phenomena which have traditionally been connected with religion. Human becoming is permeated by religious responses to a network of social relationships which is without qualification fundamental to the entire world process. Human morality, justice, character, self-esteem, and self-sacrifice belong to the interaction of social selves and their ultimate source of meaning and valuation.

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[1] For a sociological perspective upon religion and that which is religious, deeply informed by Mead's thought, see Thomas Luckmann, The Invisible Religion (New York: Macmillan Company, 1967). Luckmann views the transcendence of biological nature by the human organism as a religious phenomenon, and therefore regards the social processes that lead to the formation of the self as fundamentally religious in character (p. 49). The socialization process is fundamentally religious: "It rests on the universal anthropological condition of religion, individuation of consciousness and conscience in social processes, and is actualized in the internalization of the configuration of meaning underlying a historical social order." (P. 51.) This viewpoint emancipates the phenomenon of religion from its traditional limitation to religious institutions alone, and points out the religious dimensions of ordinary existence in a manner quite similar to the position taken in this dissertation.

This network of relationships, the Generalized Other, which is the ultimate source of meaning for the human community, is a dynamic, growing process of activity. It is both born of and encountered within the various concrete social processes which together comprise the phenomenon of human being. The Generalized Other is a process encountered in the results of what it effects as an integral aspect of the continuing creation of Reality. The form of encounter is interaction, and the result of such encounter is the emergence of novel structures and dynamics of being. The Generalized Other is an active

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social phenomenon, internalized in varying degrees of fullness by emerging social selves, and thus actively ingredient in both the formation of and the reflective activity of the human self. It is that with which we interact as we become who we are; at once the source and product of our own social experience. The Generalized Other is known by the fruits of its activity, as it creates, sustains, and is responsive to our own reciprocal behavior.

If a label must be applied to this perspective in which the ultimate source of human being, meaning, and valuation is viewed in terms of the dynamics of social interaction, it could be described as "naturalistic." The Generalized Other is a naturalistic concept because the power or causal agency it describes is contained entirely within the complex of social relationships that comprise ordinary human experience, without any recourse or appeal to another realm of being or meaning which is spatiotemporally removed from our own. It is true that the complex of relationships to which reference is made is structured according to a particular interpretive framework, that of George Mead, and that the same body of experiential data is susceptible of organization in alternative interpretive points of view. The point is not that Mead's metaphysic is the only viable option. The point is that the interpretation of experience being utilized stands complete in itself, to the exclusion of the insertion of dynamics that may be understood only from a "supernatural" point of view. The realm of the supernatural is totally excluded from consideration. It violates one of the basic assumptions of the fundamental perspective being employed--that there is but a single meaningful Reality, and that this Reality is both creative of and contained within human social experience. That aspect of Reality which is deemed ultimate or fundamentally constitutive, the Generalized Other, is conceived totally within the almost infinitely complex field of relations of which the whole is comprised.

This raises a question concerning the nature of "transcendence." Transcendence has traditionally been equated with a Being or Power which exists in a realm which is removed from the created world, and which is related to this creation only tangentially or obliquely or on special occasions. The object of religious responses is conceived to be totally other or in most respects other than the created world of experience. This is an assumption which is increasingly being challenged in the modern period, and it is challenged by the viewpoint being presented here. That which transcends need neither be totally removed from nor totally other than that which is transcended. The phenomenon of transcendence implies only a comparative distinction; it does not imply that all experiential bases of comparison be removed. The nearness or immanence of the Generalized Other does not obliterate the fact that, as the many in their unity, it transcends each of the many in their individuality. Its organizing power far surpasses that of the individual or of the generalized other of lesser dimension.

Furthermore, the Generalized Other is a behavioral project as well as a momentarily arrested structure of being, and as a behavioral project it temporally transcends the configuration of the present.

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It is a lure toward the creation of a new Reality, and as such transcends present Reality without being removed from it. Its history is our own history, its Reality our own Reality, yet it functions to draw us forth into the emergence of what has not yet come into being. This is not transcendence in some traditional usages of the term, but it is certainly transcendence within the behavioral point of view here being advanced.

The attempt to deal with the transcendent source of human being, meaning, and valuation as an actively immanent organizing and creative power within the social process of Reality leads to the abandoning of the traditional distinction between those realms and activities which are considered "sacred" and those which are considered "secular." From the perspective here being developed, the "sacralization" of certain areas of human experience has its roots in a religious attitude. Sacralization is the result of the attempt of human communities of individuals to intensify their perceptions of the ultimate source of their existence, to bring themselves ontologically nearer to this ultimate source, to express their devotion to it, and to implement their own appropriate responsive activities. Thus the sacralization of certain physical locations and ritual activities represents a natural behavioral response to facilitate the attainment of behavioral goals which are born in a common religious attitude. The sacred, be it earth or altar, tree or temple, is not an ontologically distinct structure of Reality. The drawing of a line of demarcation between the sacred and the secular is simply a functional means to a cluster of behavioral ends. When, for whatever reason, the desired function of sacralization is no longer forthcoming, the reality of the sacred passes away.

Sacred symbols, rituals, and places are truly ontogenetic or creative of reality within those communities sharing a perspective within which they do in fact bring about the realization of the social ends in response to which they were established. But in reality perspectives within which this function is lost, the distinction of sacred and secular loses its meaning. Human communities respond to that which is their ultimate source of strength and well-being within whatever framework of experience that is available to them. Thus it is neither wrong nor a mistake that the sacred and the secular are in certain historical periods and in certain types of culture separated. However, this separation is not fruitful within the framework of experience reflected in this dissertation. Within this framework, the whole of Reality has its sacred dimensions, and every human activity relates more or less directly to the divine agency.

The work of the theologian, generically considered, belongs within the framework of this religious response to the active power which is the source of human being, meaning, and valuation. It is basically the attempt to attain conceptual clarity with respect to this ultimate power--to criticize, validate, and order the historical symbols, myths, events, and activities which have arisen as expressions of the religious attitude. As an activity of conceptualization, theology always reflects a particular framework of meaning or universe of discourse belonging to a particular communal perspective or social process. It is an historical activity, without remainder, and is thereby totally limited in its possibilities to the conceptual horizons surrounding the place and time in which it is done. This factor accounts both for differences among various theologies, and for the continuing necessity that theological reconceptualization take place--even within communities sharing a common historical route of passage.

A universe of discourse is a changing linguistic structure. Meanings are born and are discarded within a moving social context. There are neither "right" nor "wrong" theologies; there are only theologies which more or less adequately conceptualize the religious attitude prevailing within a given segment of the Reality process. The point is not to suggest that theology simply reflects the lowest common denominator of "practical" religion. The work of the theologian often enables a community to reform and refine its religious practices. The point is that the activity of theological conceptualization is both time-bound and situation-bound, and therefore that differences among theologies are to be expected rather than deplored, and that the elevation of a particular theological formulation to the position of the criterion of theological truth is at best a dubious undertaking.

This raises the question of the "Christian" character of the theology being developed in these final two chapters. It is the opinion of the writer that no absolute criterion exists to distinguish between that which is Christian and that which is not. Christianity emerged historically within a small community of Jews in response to the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth. It spread outward from Palestine through the missionary and emmigratory activities of some of the members of this expanding community. Conceptualizations and ultimately specific doctrines began to emerge in the course of communication between various centers of Christian influence, and as problems of conduct arose with respect to personal morality, relations to Judaism, and relations to political authority. The religious significance perceived in Jesus, the manner in which he represented a revelation of God, the place he occupied in the structure of the universe and in relation to the God he revealed--these and other issues became questions to be adjudicated by various Christian communities in terms of the abstract world-views prevailing at those times and places. Among such world-views were Judaism, Gnosticism, Stoicism, Neo-Platonism, and, somewhat later, the rediscovery of Aristotle. The list may be expanded in more modern times by reference to Nominalism, Descartes, Spinoza, Kant, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Whitehead. The expression of that which is "Christian" is usually undertaken within a more or less well-defined conceptual framework which is itself the expression of an historical period in the Reality process. Even the so-called "negative" theology of mysticism and the more modern "kerygmatic" theologies may be analyzed in terms of metaphysics which, while not necessarily overtly borrowed from "secular" culture, do in fact reflect the social mood of the time.

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Without belaboring the point at unnecessary length, the constructive theology essayed in this dissertation represents another chapter in the story characterizing Christian theology (and all other theology) from the beginning. It is the attempt to understand a religious attitude in terms of one's view of the world at large, specifically, in terms of the metaphysic of George Mead. It is not intended to be merely or specifically Christian. It is intended to be an ecumenical framework within which a number of religious traditions may be considered. But to the extent that it seeks to deal with certain doctrines and concepts which have arisen in historical response to Jesus of Nazareth, it is to be regarded as at least Christian. The ultimate reference of this theology, however, is to that dynamic source of human being, meaning, and valuation which is generically ingredient in human activity, and which is variously conceptualized in a pluralism of theological systems. The universality of the activity of the Generalized Other precludes the attempt to establish a particular theology or religious tradition as the one that is exclusively valid as a reflection of the divine agency.

The following pages will deal with the concept of Deity and with selected doctrines and notions that have characterized the traditions of Christian theology. Not every theological problem which has been of historical concern to the Christian community will be treated. Indeed, some do not even arise within this perspective. It is hoped that the major loci or areas of concern will be covered, and that enough will have been stated so that the point of view being

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developed will stand out in the full integrity of its strengths and weaknesses. If this much is accomplished, further development may await dialogue in the marketplace of theological ideas.

Language and the Behavioral Reality of God

It must be emphasized from the onset that the notion of Deity being described in this chapter is basically functional in character. The contention is: Deity is more validly understood as a process of becoming than as a structure of being. Deity is a dynamic process of interaction, not a static substantial structure. In this fundamental characteristic it may be compared to an energy process.

An energy process is not without certain elements of structure, but an energy process can never be described accurately solely in terms of its structural elements. The fundamental characteristic of energy is that it does something, and energy may finally be explained or understood only by means of a description of what it does. For example, a steam engine represents one form in which energy is manifested. It consists of a number of structural elements such as a firebox, a boiler, pistons, valves, and a mechanical attachment to a machine that does work. Structural analysis may be pressed even deeper so as to include the chemical composition of water and the weight of the atmosphere measured in pounds per square inch. The point is: None of these structural dimensions of a steam engine explains the energy it expresses. Steam energy can only be explained functionally. Heated molecules of water expand. Expanding water molecules create pressure. This pressure, contained within a cylinder containing a piston connected to a wheel, creates a motion that may be utilized in performing work. Steam is energy because it behaves in this fashion, and the explanation of steam energy cannot be pushed beyond a description of its behavior under given conditions. The activity of steam energy is its only explanation; the structure of water molecules or a cylinder explains nothing.

Similarly, the description of Deity as all-encompassing or as eminent in all comparisons to creation or as ontologically prior to creation does not go very far toward explaining or understanding Deity. Deity enters into experience in what it effects, just as energy, and no amount of structural analysis or speculation can transcend this basic fact of experience. The activity of Deity in human experience represents its own ultimate explanation. Deity is what it is experienced to be in our interaction with it. Theology, within the Meadian frame of reference, must be a description of divine agency, power, or causal efficacy within the realm of human experience. Statements about Deity, within this framework, will be generalizations of the function of Deity in the operations of the Reality process.

This emphasis upon the functional reality of Deity should not be misconstrued as creating a dichotomy of structure and function with respect to Deity. Deity is behaviorally efficacious only within the concrete spatio-temporal events of the Reality process. These events are consummated in the emergence of things or structures which find their places in various historical routes of passage. Events are not identifiable as structural things while they are occurring, but they are experienced as concrete things in retrospect as they pass into the past. There they become a part of an organized structure of relationships. Structure, in other words, is an historical phase in the process of becoming. It is at once the emergent product of a consummated event, and a condition to be engaged in the becoming of subsequent events. The activity of Deity in various events is consummated in structural relationships. These relationships may be described in retrospect, and treated as the structure of Deity. This structure of Deity is at once the product of its activity and a condition of its further activity. The structure of Deity is an organization of the conditions of becoming.

Nevertheless, the emphasis of theology done within a Meadian perspective must fall upon the activity of Deity as it is creative of the future, rather than upon this activity as it forms the structure of the past. Deity comes to experience out of the future, as well as out of the past, in the dynamic encounter of the present. As the future made present, Deity is behaviorally ingredient in every empirical instance of becoming. In the consummation of these instances of becoming, Deity itself achieves an emergent structure. A theology which concentrates solely upon the structural aspects of Deity is a theology which is from a temporal point of view "dead." The consummated Deity of the past is not without its relevance to the "living" Deity of the future made present, but emphasis upon the past tends to remove Deity from the ongoing dynamics of the Reality process. The theological term for this phenomenon is "sin."

Difficulties surrounding the determination of the meaning of the term "God" have been liberally noted in the Christian literature of the past decade. These difficulties are actually not peculiar to the period in question, although the emergence of the "scientific" world-view, the recognition of the notion of relativity, and the advent of pluralism have accentuated this traditional problem. The term has been avoided in the preceding paragraphs, in which the problem of "God" has been placed within the framework of a dynamic, behavioral point of view. When inquiry is now made concerning the meaning of the word "God," the initial point to be made is that whatever word is used to describe the process of Deity is being used in a definite, referential sense. Its reference is to the fundamental organized process and organizing power that is the Generalized Other.

The term "God" is burdened with a number of mythologies and cosmologies which belong to the past, and which are both confusing to and misunderstood by a large portion of the present populace. It is, nevertheless, the term for the transcendent power to which reference is being made that falls most familiarly upon the ears of the peoples of Western Judeo-Christian culture. If the absolutely fundamental point is grasped that the empirical reality of the Generalized Other is of primary importance, there appears to be no compelling reason why the use of the term "God" should not be continued. The non-significant, empirically functional meaning of "God" is not at issue. The issue is the signification of this process in speech. For the purposes of this dissertation, the judgment is being made that the common response to "God" as the

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fundamental transcendent source of human existence has a value which outweighs the confusion surrounding the issues of personality, trinity, spatiality, etc., with which "God" has been freighted in the passage of time. "God" will be utilized throughout the rest of the chapter as a synonym for the Generalized Other.

A great portion of the difficulty surrounding the signification of ultimate Reality in speech has to do with the nature of speech itself. Speech emerges within an empirically defined social context. This context may be of vast dimensions, but these dimensions fall short of the dimensions of the whole. The Generalized Other is an empirical reality, and thus belongs within the realm of meaning, but its reality is so generically empirical that it almost defies encapsulization in a symbol of any particular universe of discourse within the generic whole. It actually represents the very possibility of linguistic activity. Every linguistic symbol which emerges with the power to elicit common responses within a particular universe of discourse, so emerges because it reflects in some dimension the organization of being effected by the Generalized Other. Organized social reality always precedes signification in speech. The social reality of the Generalized Other precedes the emergence of every linguistic symbol, but perhaps no linguistic symbol is universal enough to call forth from the generic human community the coordinated series of particular responses that are appropriate to the Generalized Other. As the unity of the Reality process, the Generalized Other so transcends the universality of the universes of discourse contained within it that its symbolization is always incomplete. The empirical efficacy of Deity is always broader in scope than can be symbolized within the limits of the universe of discourse that has emerged within a particular reality process.[1]

What does emerge within human experience, generically considered, is a pluralism of what may be termed "role-specific" theological language. By "role-specific" is meant language that has emerged within a particular context, and which, within that context, serves to call forth a common response to the activity of the Generalized Other as it is experienced within that context. Role-specific theological language perhaps misses the universality of the process that is its pre-linguistic possibility, but it serves to enable meaningful communication about that process in so far as it is immediately relevant. To use Mead's terminology, role-specific theological language does afford organized participation in the Reality process, and communication of that participation to others. Individual reality structures, whether more concrete or more abstract, always manifest a certain amount of this role-specific response to the Generalized Other. This is coextensive with the continuing historical existence of any social process, for when such response ceases to be forthcoming, that social process passes into extinction.

Role-specific theological language may be divided into at least two categories; that of traditionally "religious" language, and that of language which implements the organizing power of the Generalized Other in areas of human experience which traditionally have not been regarded as "religious." The term "God," for example, falls within the former category. As a role-specific theological term it elicits a particular kind of response within the congregation of an English-speaking church at worship. The response may be entirely different when a number of the members of this congregation who have studied Karl Barth engage in a study group with a young minister who has studied Alfred North Whitehead. The terms "Yahweh" and "Allah" will also elicit varied role-specific responses. When one begins to think in terms of role-specific responses, the meaning of the term "God" becomes equated with the response it actually calls forth in a given situation. It is at this level of meaning that "God" has become such a problem for modern man. But when attention is turned toward the pre-linguistic behavioral reality in terms of which "God" may be understood, the meaning of "God" is the manner in which the activities of the generic human community and their meaningful worlds do in fact interact in an organized pattern. If the term "God" can be understood in terms of this fundamental organizing process, it can be retained as a part of our theological vocabulary.

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[1] This represents a profound empirical basis for the phenomenon in many religions of taboos concerning the speaking of the divine name. The activity of the god is more comprehensive than that which can be spoken, and thus naming the god may be construed as the sinful or sacrilegious act of robbing the god of honor that is his due.

There is also a type of role-specific language which may be described as "theological," but which does not appear on the surface to be theological at all. Take, for example, words such as "law," "freedom," "equality," "justice," "brotherhood," and "peace." These are words which may be overheard in religious places of worship, to be sure, but they are also fundamental to the vocabulary of "secular" social institutions such as the police force, the schools, the court system, and governments at all levels. The point is that within whatever specific context they are utilized, they elicit the appropriate response to the organizing activity of the Generalized Other. They symbolize the condition of relatedness that is the structure of the Generalized Other. The future of the Generalized Other is largely bound up in how social institutions and the human community at large continue to respond to these terms. These terms represent a social reality that is absolutely fundamental to human being, meaning, and valuation. In this functional sense, they stand for God every bit as much as does the term "God" itself. The reality of God is found in the functional supports of human social existence, which means that the institutions which implement these supports are of ultimate theological significance.

God as the Ultimate Source of Human Being, Meaning, and Valuation

Creation

God's existence, in the theological perspective here being developed, consists of an emerging pattern of active relationships. This pattern of relationships preserves much of the order of the past, organizes Reality in its hypothetically arrested present, and lures the Reality-process toward emergent configurations in which organization or sociality is increased. God is not coextensive with all aspects of the Reality-process, but neither is there any occurrence within this process that comes into being outside of interaction with God. God is an active arrangement of the conditions of becoming, and is therefore a party to every particular instance of becoming. This is God's function as Creator.

The word "becoming" is here used to describe a complex process of interaction in which, within a defined event having temporal extension, a novel form of being emerges. The interactive aspects of becoming cannot be overstressed. That which becomes is the emergent result of the interaction of a multitude of factors comprising an entire social situation. Each of these socially related factors exerts a processive causal influence upon the others, until the emergent event is consummated in an existential form having a novel social configuration. The process of becoming thus involves a temporal process of social interaction in which that which was, the past, yields to that which shall be, the future. The reality of the past, the reality of the future, and, in the case of the human self, the reality of the present in which the past and the future are integrated, are the conditions of becoming.

God is ingredient in the event or process of becoming as a socializing, unifying agency. Every situation out of which emergence proceeds participates at least minimally in the unity of the Reality process. This organized character of every reality represents the ingredience of God in that reality. The causal influence of the past within the process of becoming reflects the achievement of God in integrating that past into the process of Reality as a whole. To the extent that this causal structure circumscribes the possibilities of the reality that is emerging in the event of becoming, God may be said to be foundational to the event that is becoming.

The causality operative in the becoming of an emergent event is not limited to the continuities that are maintained with the past. There is also a causality that determines the character of the event from the future. The emergent dimensions of the consummated event--those aspects which represent novelty--are the result of this future causality. The seeds of emergence are in some sense "there" in the achievements of the past, but they attain definition and concretion only in response to the lure of the onrushing future. In the Meadian perspective being developed here, God is the lure of the future toward the emergent realization of broadened, deepened, and more richly intensified levels of social integration. The temporal movement of every evolutionary reality opens up novel possibilities in the passage of that reality toward its momentary consummation. There is an impetus in this temporal process toward the integration and coordination of these possibilities with the whole field of relationships within which the event is occurring. The process of the concretization of these emergent possibilities is the causal activity of God in the future.

God's circumscription of the process of becoming from the past, and his luring of that process toward intensified realization of social relationships from the future, are actually abstractions from a single process of concrescence that is occurring in a passing present. They are useful abstractions, however, for they serve to indicate the complexity of the emergent event. They also indicate that there are distinct qualitative dimensions to the process in which being is created. God's ingredience in this process is of a dual character. There is a dimension of God's activity of creation, corresponding to his integrative achievements of the past, which is distinctly conservative. Every reality, in an hypothetically arrested moment of its temporal procession, represents a definite level of social integration with Reality as a whole. This is its participation in the structure of God, and it is this level of participation in God which is the presupposition of its re-creation in succeeding moments of its temporal passage. In each of these succeeding moments, God seeks to maintain or conserve at least that much integration into the unity of the whole. Every recreation of every reality, however simple or complex, is dependent upon God's socializing achievements of the past. In this minimal sense, God is creator of every existential form.

However, God's activity in the process of creation has also been described as arising out of the future, and this is where the qualitative dimension of creation enters in. There are always possibilities of deepening and intensifying the social participation of the individual reality in the whole. The concretization of these more socialized possibilities represents what may be termed "creativity," as contrasted to the mere perpetuation of achieved levels of sociality, which may be termed "creation." The foundation of creativity is the activity of God in the future--the organizational possibilities implicit in the emerging Generalized Other. Creation is every bit as dependent upon God as is creativity, but creation may take place with results which, with only minimal dimensions of novelty, simply conserve the values of the past. A stone represents a history of creation. The qualitative dimension of becoming belongs to creativity. In creativity, new values accrue to the process of becoming. The same stone, fashioned into a tool or a sculpture, represents a history of creativity. It comes to embody participation in far broader sections of the Reality process than it ever did as a simple stone. Through creativity it becomes integral in an immediate sense to a man's entire family or to the spirit of an entire culture. The future of every reality and the Reality process as a whole lies in the occurrence of creativity. This is the direction in which the emerging God is leading his creation.

It must be noted at this point that God, in the perspective being developed, is neither the omnipotent creator nor the omnipotent source of creativity. God is the activity of the individual many in so far as they function as a social unity. The many also function in their individuality, and there are dimensions of this individuality which transcend the socializing power of God. The significance of this observation is that in any instance of becoming there are elements in the situation or context of becoming which fall outside of the unified pattern of interaction that is God. As is continually stressed, becoming is an interactive process, and a part of the interaction is between the relatively socialized and the relatively unsocialized. God does not create coercively, nor is he creative in a coercive sense. God both creates and is creative in conjunction with aspects of the situation over which he exerts no control in any final sense. God is more accurately described as "co-creator" than as "creator," "co-creative" than as "creative." God's power of creation and creativity alike function as socializing vectors rather than as coercive deeds. The traditional attribute of omnipotence does not apply to God in this perspective. Here God's power must be viewed in terms of "omnivalence."[1] God continually influences the process of becoming in the direction of socialization.

There is still another contrast to be noted between the doctrine of creation as developed in some theological traditions, and the doctrine as developed within a Meadian perspective. If Reality is viewed as a process of emergent evolution, both creation and the occurrence of creativity must be viewed in a recurrent sense. Reality is continually in the process of being recreated. The doctrine of God as co-creator and co-creative must therefore also be viewed in a recurrent sense. God's omnivalent activity as the foundational source of creation and creativity is ingredient in every event in which becoming takes place. This is a universal dimension of the entire Reality process. Not every consummated event concretizes the social possibilities implicit in God's creative activity, but this is a function of the interactive character of becoming. No instance of becoming occurs outside of a foundational relationship to God, and everything which comes into being is at least minimally sustained by this relationship. There are no absolute

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[1] The term "omnivalence" is a neologism which seeks to capture the dynamics of a chemical or social "valence," which is defined as an interactive combining power or attractive capacity, and to apply these dynamics to a description of God's universal ingredience in the events of the Reality process.

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existential forms in a relational universe.

The foundational or ultimate character of the activity of God as the source of all being is perhaps most clearly illustrated by making reference to that form of being known as the human self. The self comes into being through a process of role-taking in which the organized social interactive patterns of an entire community are internalized within the individual organism. The self, at any hypothetically arrested moment of its existence, has the imported structure of the meaningful world of others. The attitudes and meanings in terms of which the self views itself reflect an organized social process which participates in the organized character of the Reality process as a whole. That is, the self internalizes a reflection of the creative activity of God. The social processes which the self internalizes may represent only certain aspects of the unity of the whole, but the self does not come into being unless these objectively organized aspects of the whole are there to be internalized. Thus the being and activity of God are foundational to the emergence of the human self. Participation in God is the minimal requirement of selfhood.

The self, in turn, is co-agent with God in the occurrence of creativity. It is in the present created by the human mind that God's creative future possibilities are made most effective in the process of concretization that is always taking place. The self reacts to the stimulus of the future, and the attitude of socialization helps bring into being emergent qualities and intensities of social existence. The power of creativity--the concretization of the emergent social forms

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of existence toward which God is continually straining--is resident in the divine-human encounter occurring in the dialogic self. Thus the being of the self illustrates both the power and the limitation of the theological notion of God as creator.

Providence

The introduction of the attitudes and meanings peculiar to the phenomenon of human selfhood, together with the foregoing discussion of God's omnivalent co-creative activity, tends to shift the focus of the discussion of the function of God in the Reality process away from the traditional doctrine of Creation and into the kind of dynamics traditionally treated under the doctrine of Providence. God's activity is very much a functional dimension of Reality-creation in the present. To the extent that the social processes out of which the significant meanings of language and the basic attitudes of the self emerge reflect the achievements of God in organizing the Reality process, God may be described as the active Provider or source of human meaning.

Human being in its social dimensions stands at the vanguard of the evolutionary process in its current stage of development. This is due to the control over the Reality process that has emerged in the ability of the human self to share meanings and, in the operations of the mind, to project these meanings into the future where they can be tested out as possibilities for the reconstruction of Reality. Control of the future resides in hypothetical confrontation and analysis of the future in the present, and in the choice within this present of which future shall in fact emerge in concretion. Individual forms of being become, through the significant symbols of language, means to the realization of future goals. These means are chosen and utilized by human social selves in the context of the attitudes and values of the communities or generalized others in terms of which these future goals are selected. Perhaps none of these generalized others ever fully represents the organization of the Generalized Other, or God, but each such generalized other does represent a greater or lesser degree of participation in this structure of the whole. To the degree that God is represented in the basic reference group or generalized other which is the context in which both goals and the means of attaining these goals are chosen, God is ingredient in the control over the evolution of the Reality process exercised by the human community.

God's providential activity is thus to be discovered within the processes of human reflective activity. Providence is as near to human beings as the very meanings in terms of which human beings experience Reality. God's providential activity preserves Reality in its attained configurations through the common meanings which symbolize the sociality of the past. God's providential activity also lures Reality toward emergent and more intensely socialized configurations through the possibilities represented by the implicit universality of these same common meanings.

This divine providential activity is not a coercive force. It is coextensive with the activity of the human social self, which is only partially controlled by the socially internalized "me." The choices of the fundamentally individual and uncontrolled "I" lie beyond the power of total control. But the "I" does not lie beyond

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the influence of God as he is internalized as a "me," and it is in the dialogue of the "I" and the "me" that God's providential power is active. Clearly, then, God's activity as Provider is as "cooperative" as his activity as Creator. One may state this relationship in terms of Providence as being God's continuing activity of co-creation. The means of Providence are the meanings in terms of which the processes of Reality are experienced.

The location of God's providential activity within the processes of human reflective activity does not imply that God has not been providentially involved in the Reality process prior to the emergence of minded selves. The emergence of minded selves represents a distinct increment in God's providential control of Reality--an increment coextensive with the difference between the operations of mind and animate selection and control of the environment--but God's function as the active unitive structure of Reality precedes the emergence of significant meanings. The minded self is the product of the internalization of social processes which are causal realities of the past. God's organizing power is observed in the coordinated functioning of these past realities. God's providential involvement in the Reality process in its prehuman stages has taken place under conditions which have been limiting and conservative by comparison to the present, but it has been no less efficacious. With the emergence of mind, God's own possibilities of directing and controlling the emergence of Reality have increased along with those of man. Man, the most social of the living beings of the earth, now becomes the means through which God

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exercises his socializing providential function. But man's means, the meanings in terms of which he deals with the universe of his experience, are quite literally the providential gifts of the Generalized Other from a prior period in time.

Eschatology

The identification of the minded human community as the vanguard of evolving Reality and the location of God's providential activity raises the question of the responsibility of human activity to the Generalized Other which is its source and sustenance. This is perhaps a question to be treated in the category of Ethics, but to the extent that it involves further analysis of the omnivalent presence of God in human affairs, it belongs also to the discussion of the notion of God. The thesis is that God, understood in terms of the Generalized Other, is objectively involved in the emergence of values and in the processes of making value judgments. This thesis is expressed by the statement that God is the ultimate source of human valuation. Valuation is the process of the selection of goals and of means for the attainment of these goals. The standard or criterion of the valuation process is, abstractly stated, the degree of sociality or integration represented in the consummation of the act. Thus, while concrete values do emerge within the consummatory phases of an act, the question of value transcends the particular act in so far as that act takes place in vastly complex social context. The real question of value is one of coordinating the values emerging in individual acts, and communal acts on a small scale, with the values emerging in the consummation of communal acts on a grand scale. It is only through such coordination that the goal of the valuation process, which is the maximal realization of value, can be attained. The task is now one of analyzing the ultimate role of God in this process, and this analysis corresponds to what is traditionally treated under the theological category of Eschatology.

A kind of temporal scheme thus emerges in the treatment of the notion of God as the ultimate source of human being, meaning, and valuation. The subject matter, the omnivalent ingredience of God in human affairs, remains constant; but the activity of God as Creator has a distinct past orientation, the providential activity of God has a distinct present orientation, and the eschatological activity of God has a distinct future orientation. The confluence of the notions of Creation, Providence, and Eschatology in the reflective "now" of human experience is the point of chief existential significance; but the recognition of the inclusive temporal dimensions of divine-human encounter in the "now" is important for a complete understanding of the structural relationship between God and Reality.

Values emerge in the consummatory phases of the act, but to the extent that the goal of an act is a matter of selection, the birth of value lies in the selective process. Selection takes place under the impulses that are present in basic attitudes. Attitudes are complex systems of responsiveness--incipient acts awaiting appropriate environmental stimuli. The self is ready to respond to its world in advance of particular stimulation. The attitude assumed by the self toward its world is socially derived from the attitudes of others in

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its community. This attitude resides chiefly in the symbols of language in terms of which the individual experiences his world. The individual views himself in the role of the organized responses of others, and thus the basic attitudes of the self are the attitudes of the community in which the self becomes. Since the process of the emergence of value begins in these basic attitudes, the values of the self are also the values of the community. When the self seeks values that are divergent from those of its immediate communal relationship, it is only because the self has internalized the attitudes and values of a different community. The only absolutely individual values are those which belong to the non-reflexive biological individual, and even these values (satisfaction of hunger, release of bladder pressure, etc.) are generally achieved through highly socialized forms of activity.

Selfhood is basically the interpersonal gift of other selves whose mode of communal interaction is organized in definite patterns which are internalized by whatever new selves are generated in that community. To the extent to which these organized interactive patterns participate in the Generalized Other, which is the organized interactive pattern of the whole, the individual selves which come into being by the internalization of those patterns participate in the social structure of God. No particular reality structure exists in an absolutely disjunctive relationship to the active unity of Reality as a whole. Therefore no individual self is devoid of fundamental structural dependence upon God. God is ingredient in the basic attitudes and values of the individual self. This social datum is the experiential basis of the theological notion that a "divine spark" is to be found within every individual human being. The "divine spark" is a coordinated social role which is the very basis of the self. The gift of God to the individual self is an active placement, grounded in the fundamental attitudes of the self, in the active unity of the many which comprise Reality. God does, at least to some degree, "dwell" in every man.

The indwelling of God in the individual self does not mean that the self is controlled in its activities by God. The self comes into being as an internalization of a pluralism of organized communal processes, each of which represents a greater or lesser degree of participation in the organized pattern of the whole. When the self selects the goals it is to seek, it may be influenced by one of those organized processes or by a number of them in combination. God is ingredient in the selection process to the precise extent to which he is ingredient in the social structures in terms of which selection is accomplished. But the selection is not accomplished in a deterministic fashion. The self in reflection is a social product, but the self in action is a dialogic process. The social product, or "me," interacts with a radically individual "I," and concrete activity is the result of this dialogic interaction.

The "I" is responsible for the particular "me" in terms of which the self is constituted in the act, and also for which of the alternative possibilities inherent in the act shall be selected. The choices of the self are socially, and therefore divinely, influenced.

They are not socially or divinely determined. The indwelling of God in the self is simply a vector in the valuation process. The values in terms of which the self may be constituted in any given situation are as legion as the social processes in which the self is implicated, and the "divine" character of the values that are realized in the consummation of the act are the emergent results of a divine-human encounter which is open-ended right up to the point of its consummation.

Nevertheless, the characterization of God as the "ultimate" source of human valuation is a valid description of the divine-human encounter that takes place in the valuation process. Maximum realization of value is a function of the coordination of the "I" with the "me" that most nearly approximates the social organization of the whole, or God. The fullest self--the self that is able to realize its own possibilities to the maximum extent--is the self that is most completely socialized. This results from participation in human social communities which are broadly inclusive in the sense that their organized social structures are of such a character that they exist in harmonious relationship with other social structures.

Complete social harmony is a social project rather than a social reality. It is that future toward which God and the generic human community alike are striving. It exists largely as a set of social ideals implicit in the university of the linguistic symbols in terms of which Reality is experienced. Nevertheless, it is approximated in some concrete forms of social relationship more closely than in others, and the best interests of the individual self lie in the internalization of the attitudes and values prevailing in these social processes. The objectively social constitution of the self indicates the fundamental importance of harmony as a social project, and the being of God as the active unity at the core of Reality is the ultimate source of socializing power.

The self's alternative to the realization of maximally social values is the perpetuation of social structures in which activity does not proceed in a coordinated fashion. The goals of various individuals and social sub-groups are at crossed purposes with one another, and the existential result of this disharmony is truncation of the self, conflict of values, repression, and perhaps even the destruction of the social process in which this occurs. The theological term for this phenomenon is "judgment." Judgment is not a single event that occurs in the eschatological future. It does belong to the future to the extent to which it occurs in the consummatory phases of the act, but it belongs basically to the eschatological character of the continuing succession of events that Reality is.

Judgment is the recurring consequence of the failure of the self in the valuation process to objectify itself in terms of highly socialized ideals. The "wrath" of God is an existential reality for every self and community of selves which elevates its own narrow social configuration to the place of importance which belongs to the social configuration of the whole of Reality. God's wrath and judgment rain almost automatically upon the individual and sub-group many when the values sought by these many in their isolation exclude the universal values of the many in their unity, upon which the isolated many are in fact dependent. The "suffering" of God in such situations does not obviate the suffering which also occurs in the recalcitrant human community. The consequences of judgment may become apparent only after a period of time has passed, but they are objectively there within the fabric of the social process.

The continuing experience of the effects of judgment is the empirical basis for the religious prohibition against idolatry, and for the formulation of this prohibition in the theological notion of the so-called "protestant" principle.[1] The prohibition against idolatry and the affirmation of the "protestant principle" both entail an understanding of the negative consequences of the substitution in the valuation process of a social structure of a lesser degree of sociality for the most highly socialized structure, the Generalized Other.

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[1] The "protestant principle" contains, in the terms of Paul Tillich, "the divine and human protest against any absolute claim made for a relative reality." (See The Protestant Era, trans. by James Luther Adams [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948], p. 163. While the phrase belongs to Tillich, the concept of the "protestant principle" belongs to the entire community of protestant theology. It is an implicitly universal concept, and thus may be generalized throughout the realm of theological speculation as a whole. In its generalized form, the concept is that of a universal critical principle which derives from the notion of an emergent God. This critical principle affirms that the ordering activity of the emerging God always stands ahead of the ordered achievements of any given social process, when compared according to the standard of sociality. The socialization of generic Reality, or of any particular reality, is a future project, not a past achievement. The point of divergence from Tillich's formulation of the principle centers about Tillich's affirmation of a non-relative or unconditional reality. (Ibid.) No reality stands unconditioned in the perspective being developed in this dissertation.

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Unless the basic attitudes and value structures out of which choices among existential possibilities emerge are broadly social in character, such choices lead to retrogressive social developments in which creativity is smothered by conflict and irrelevance. In effect, God is factored out of the creative process in idolatrous activity, and may thus be encountered only as judge. The "protestant principle" functions as a constant conceptual reminder that the sociality inherent in the structure of the emerging God is always more complete than the level of sociality represented in what is occurring in the processes of human affairs. The affirmation of this critical principle does not spare the human community the experience of the effect of judgment, but it does help prevent the type of activity which might lead toward a much more severe experience of judgment. By freeing the self or a community of selves from bondage to the achievements of the past, the "protestant principle" helps open the self or community to the emergent creative possibilities of the future.

The basic social attitudes and values of a community of selves are given expression in the social institutions of that community.[1] Social institutions, such as governments, schools, law enforcement, churches, etc., are organized expressions of the dimensions of interpersonal existence shared in common by the members of a social grouping. They embody the social order that is taken for granted by that group as a whole, and function in such a manner as to provide sanction for these social practices and to control behavior which deviates from these standards of order. To the extent that social institutions function in harmony with the socialized pattern of the Generalized Other, they represent divine order in the world. This is the empirical, sociological basis for the theological notion that the state is God's appointed means of preserving order and justice in the world. Social institutions, to the degree that they do participate in the sociality of the whole, are God's functional means of social control. God's judgment upon anti-social behavior does in fact achieve expression in the response of social institutions, such as the courts, to the behavior of individuals which falls outside of institutional norms. Justice, in the distributive sense of the term, can be achieved for individuals only within a system of order in which the majority of individuals act within the confines of interactive patterns which provide every individual encompassed within these patterns with a commonly approved set of rights.

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[1] For a discussion of the dynamics of social institutions, see above, chapter three, pp. 261-263.

Social institutions, however, frequently become arrested at a particular stage of their historical development. When such arrest occurs, the participation of the institution in the creative sociality of the emerging God is diminished, and the institution itself falls under God's judgment of wrath. The institution comes to represent the social interests and rights only of particular sections of the generic social process, to the exclusion of the rights and interests of other social elements which are equally implicated in the same process. This subverts the demands of divine justice, and creates a situation in which the creative possibilities arising in the experience of the most fully socialized selves all include the reconstruction of the restrictive institution. Depending upon prevailing attitudes and social conditions, the means of such reconstruction may be evolutionary or revolutionary. In either case the reconstructive activity represents the judgment of God upon the institution.

The social standards internalized by the self do not always, or even predominantly, lead to the judgment of the self in the negative sense. Judgment is an event having both positive and negative dimensions. The social standards by which the self may be judged and condemned are the same standards by which the self may be judged and "saved." Salvation, just as judgment which condemns, is not an event that occurs but once at the end of time. Salvation is a process involving a maximal realization of value in the course of normal social activity. Maximal realization of value is partially a function of the selection of proper goals, and this in turn is heavily influenced by one's basic attitudes and values. If the evaluative choices of the self take place in the context of the attitude of the Generalized Other, the result is a style of life which expresses the experience of salvation.

The dynamics of salvation for the individual may be described as follows. One's view of oneself, or self-concept, is a function of how well one is able to integrate oneself into a community. The values of the self are those of its social context. Successful realization of these social values is the equivalent of maximal realization of the values available to the self. The self cannot survive in a healthy condition without this form of social approval. To the extent that the values of the immediate community participate in those of the generic community, the individual who wins the approbation of the community wins also the approbation of God. When the values of the immediate community participate only minimally in the social organization which the Generalized Other is and toward which the Generalized Other is moving, the experience of salvation can be attained only by conceptualizing oneself in terms of a community of broader social inclusiveness.

Historically, within the Christian faith, this broadly inclusive community has been symbolized as the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God, as a set of ideal ends internalized within the self, is that order of society in which maximally socialized attitudes would be found equally within all individual selves. The Kingdom of God remains an ideal to be sought rather than a valid description of generic human interaction, but it nevertheless functions to bring the experience of salvation to individuals, and at times to whole communities. When the valuation process takes place in the context of the attitude of the Kingdom of God, the result is fullness within the self, even when the concrete results of the act fall short of the ideal goals in terms of which the act was conceived. This fullness of self-expression, born of the attitude of the Generalized Other, is the experience of salvation. It is the gift of God, who transcends the narrowness of any given communal structure and the relative isolation of the self within such a structure. Salvation in its distributive sense involves massive social reconstruction, but it is also embodied in the experience of individuals as they realize the greatest possible value in the concrete situations in which they exist.

The Being of God in Abstraction from Creation

The foregoing description of God as the ultimate source of the being of the self, the experience of the self, and the evaluative dimensions of the operations of the self, raises a question concerning God's own being as a self. This is the question of the "personal" character of God, and it receives a great deal of attention in contemporary Christian theology. The reasons for this are probably quite complex, but at least one of these reasons would seem to be that selfhood or personality represents the highest, most socialized state of created being. This is true both from an evolutionary point of view and from the point of view of the Old Testament roots of Judeo-Christian culture.[1] The reasoning process would appear to be based in the notion that created values and operations exist in an eminent form in the Creator. From this point of view it becomes unthinkable that the Creator of persons should be any less than personal in his own being. This has not been a consistent affirmation in the history of Christian theology, but it does have strong traditional roots and is very much in vogue in the contemporary period. It therefore deserves at least some attention.

The position taken here is that the structure of God, the Generalized Other, is not personal. Selfhood, personality, consciousness, mind, and the other aspects of personal existence clearly represent a complex and impressive form of being. The phenomenon of selfhood does represent the most advanced existential achievement in the evolutionary process which Reality is. Personal existence, nevertheless, is but one form of existence. It is a form of existence which comes into being in a context of relationships which is much more inclusive and much more complex than any individual person. To be a person is to be almost totally dependent upon a process of countless years of interaction and development. This interactive process is more fundamental than any particular existential form it has spawned.

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[1] Man is given dominion over the rest of creation in the creation narratives of Genesis 1 and 2.

God is the active, ordering core of this more fundamental process. As the organized and organizing core of the Reality process, God transcends the phenomenon of the personal. God is that transpersonal arrangement of the conditions of becoming which enables persons to come into being. Without the organization of the Generalized Other, the form of the personal would not exist. To apply the category of the personal directly to God is to fail to comprehend the extent of sociality involved in the reality of God. The person may on occasion reflect the breadth of this sociality in the structure of the self, but for the most part personal existence is much less socialized than the structure of Reality which is fundamental to its emergence.

The transpersonal ordering activity of God is not without its points of similarity to the personal mode of existence. Just as the human self consists of a dialogic relationship between achieved configurations of social existence internalized as a "me," and projected possibilities of future social configurations called forth by the "I"; so also is there a similar relationship in the being of God between achieved levels of social existence, and patterns of social organization which exist only as possibilities for the future. God is ingredient in every event that takes place, both as the organization of the limiting social conditions that represent continuity with the past, and as the openness of the amorphous future which may emerge in discontinuity with the past. The unity of this dialogic or dipolar ingredience of God in the events characterizing the process of becoming is found in the valence toward organization and sociality. This socializing valence is the aspect of God which remains consistent in all events in which God is encountered. It may be compared by analogy to that aspect of personal being described as an attitude. God is encountered, both in the past and in the future, as a power that organizes, maintains, and helps create organized, social, and universal structures of existence. God's "attitude" is one of socialization. God himself, in this view, is straining forward toward the realization of his destiny.

The implementation of this attitude is where the analogy between the dipolar character of God and the dialogic character of personal existence is severely strained. The Generalized Other does not, presumably, have either a central nervous system by means of which future possibilities may be pretested, or an unpredictable "I" which enters into the dialogic selection process. God's only nervous system is the organized character of the Reality process itself, and God's only "I" is the activity of the individuals and groups comprising that process. This does not signify any particular debility in God. The structure of the Generalized Other is fundamental to the being and

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function of both these attributes of personal existence. The human organism is the product of an evolutionary process over a protracted period of time, and that organism functions in all aspects within definite societal structures. It is true that the human organism exhibits certain forms of behavior which are attributable to structural capacities that are not found per se in the Generalized Other, but this is always the case with particulars and sub-universals when they are compared to the universal under which they are subsumed.

The point to be emphasized is that the transpersonal structure of the Generalized Other is much more complex and variegated than the personal structure of the self. The organization of every individual self, viewed collectively, is found in the organization of the Generalized Other. Whereas much of the organization of the whole is unencountered by an unknown to the self, God is universally adequate to every event of the Reality process. As being the organized structure of all achieved levels of social interaction, God matches the social organization informing the act of any given self. As embracing at any given moment all of the possibilities of the immediate future, God matches whatever future possibility emerges into actuality by means of the act of an individual self. God exists in encounter as the source of human being, meaning, and valuation. God consists, in this encounter, of all the functioning processes of social interaction--concrete and abstract, actual and possible. In each individual event God exhibits a slightly different structure--the structure that is relevant to what is occurring in that event. But the structure of God, when viewed in terms of its relevance to the Reality process as a whole, is more socialized and complex than any sub-structure of reality. God is at once the achievements of the whole and the possibilities of the whole, in what may be described as a dipolar relationship.

In encounter with individuals and sub-groups of the whole, the structure of God both as achievement and as possibility is altered. God is responsive to interaction with creation. But the social structure of God, again both as an achievement and as a possibility, is never exceeded by any existential form other than God himself. As the socializing power of existence, God is always more comprehensive than and temporally ahead of the creation with which he interacts. His control over this creation, exercised through functioning concrete and abstract generalized others, is incomplete. His socializing activity, however, is omnivalent, and therein lies the hope of creation. God is the ultimate source of socializing powers moving the world of human experience toward its emergent future.

Within the Meadian framework of interpretation, this vision of a transpersonal God, actively related in a dipolar fashion to each event occurring within the Reality process, represents an alternative to the traditional notion of the trinitarian character of God. Trinitarian doctrine would appear to have evolved as a means of dealing with the problem of the relationship of God as absolute to God as related or revealed. The problem can also be stated in terms of the relationship of the one and the many in God. Tradition is unanimous in ascribing unity to the Godhead. Tradition also seems sensitive to

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the notion of diversity in the Godhead, but is much less than unanimous in its description of this diversity. Many of the descriptions, however, deal with the notion of a "Trinity."

From a Meadian point of view, the concept of diversity within God is accepted, but the concept of a trinity is rejected. As far as the basic form of the problem is concerned, "duality" is more descriptive of the character of God than is "trinity." But as far as the notion of diversity in God is concerned, "multiplicity" is a much better term. God is actively, causally implicated throughout the panoply of events that comprise Reality. Yet God is also the functioning unity of these events and the process within which they occur. This unity belongs only to the organizing activity of God. It is only indirectly reflected in the events which God orders. Thus, within a universal dipolar relationship, God is both a functioning unity and a dimension of the diversified many. This is the relationship the notion of trinity seeks to describe. It is a set of dynamics universally characterizing a generalized other. To the extent that traditional trinitarian formulas ascribe an exceptional or supernatural character to the Trinity, and to the extent that the concept of "threeness" tends to confuse the issue, the Meadian alternative is to be preferred.

Basic Theological Dynamics of Human Existence

The Image of God

Man is a particular form of being in which meanings arise that participate more fully in the Reality process than they do for any other form of being, and which may communicate these meanings more fully than any other form of being may communicate them. The values which arise in man are not so much a series of ends oriented toward quantitative survival of the organism, as they are orientations toward the qualitative reconstruction of the Reality process itself. Man is the being of conscience--of a process of "knowing-with."[1] Man's experience of the Reality process is a bringing of the organization of that process within the organism in the form of symbols. The organized interactional patterns of the Generalized Other are more nearly approximated in the being of man than in the being of any other form. Man is but one of the many forms that find their place in the transcendent unity of the Generalized Other, but man is also the only one of these many that is able to include the behavior of all the others within his own fundamental existential patterns. This has given man dominion over the remaining many, and has placed him at the forefront of the evolving Reality process. The organization of the whole is reflected in the con-science of man, making man almost in a literal sense the bearer of the "image of God."[2]

The being of man in the image of God must be understood in a radical sense in the Meadian perspective being developed. Just as God within this perspective has no other existence than that which he has in the emerging relationships of the social Reality process, the human self has no other existence than that which it has in the emerging relationships of its environing social processes. The con-science of

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[1] See above, chapter two, p. 203.

[2] Genesis 1:26.

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the self is the self in its entirety. The self, like God, is an emerging configuration of relationships. The configuration changes from moment to moment, with the passage of time, but the fact of relatedness does not change. This affirmation must, of course, be made of every existential form within relational Reality. Within the Reality process, however, it belongs peculiarly to the being of God and of man. It is a matter of the quality and intensity of the relationships in which God and man are. The being of the tree and the squirrel are fulfilled within the context of a relational structure; but these relationships, important and complex as they are, are rather easily achieved and maintained. The being of God, on the other hand, is fulfilled only in the creative realization of the heighth, depth, and intensity of every dimension of the relational structure of Reality. In a more theological term, the being of God is love--the drawing together of pluralistic Reality in richly diversified unity.

Love is also the being of man. The self exists only in drawing to itself the depth and richness of the interaction in which it is emerging. This is not an option of the self; it is what the self must do in order to maintain its existence. God and the self are dependent structures, without remainder. They depend for their existence upon drawing together in depth of harmony the vast complex of relationships out of which their existence emerges. They are also uniquely dependent upon each other. Though not identical, yet God's possibilities are those of man, and man's possibilities are those of God. While the term has connotations which are actually incompatible with the framework of

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emergent evolution within which this analysis is undertaken, one may say that the "essence" of God and man alike is love. In this sense, the image of God in man is to be understood as love.

The image of God, strictly speaking, is that which man is rather than a quality which man has. Nevertheless, there is a particular kind of freedom in man's being as the image of God which throws the divine-human relationship into question. Stated positively, the freedom of man is to immerse himself in the being of God, and by such a commitment to realize his own ultimate fulfillment in loving creativity. This freedom is found in no other existential form. But there is a negative dimension to this freedom also. Man may avoid making such a commitment to realize his freedom. He may turn his back upon his fulfillment, and live out his life in a manner that is destructive both of himself and of the God who is seeking to emerge in his activity. The basic structure of the self is an internalization of objective patterns of social interaction which, at least to a degree, approximate or participate in the valency of God's love toward the increased quality and harmony of the relationships comprising the Reality process. Every "me" is an objectification of such interactive social patterns, and these patterns become the basis of the fundamental attitudes of the self out of which the activities of the self arise. To the extent that the organization of the whole or the effect of God's love is thus represented in the foundation of the self, the self becomes the instrument of God's loving, socializing activity. But to the extent that the self is truncated, reflecting in its structure

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only a small segment of the configuration of the whole, and to the extent that the activities of the self are the product of the dialogue of the socially controlled "me" with the uncontrolled and unpredictable "I," the self lies beyond the control of God's love. One of the options of the self, in the inner dialogue of the "I" and the "me," is therefore to fail to actualize its freedom to love. Man's ontogenetic dependence upon love may be inverted, and the ensuing activities of the self may effect the desocialization--or even the destruction--of certain interactive patterns of reality. The result is an impoverishment of the self, the world, and God alike.

To speak of man as being the image of God is therefore to be asking a question of man, and ultimately of the entire Reality process. A tremendous power to control the course of emerging Reality inheres in the linguistic processes of human experience. The direction in which this power is implemented, however, is indeterminate. The future of Reality exists as a series of possibilities encountered in the present of cognitive experience. In the cognitive present, choices are exercised among these future possibilities. These choices are deeply rooted in the fundamental attitudes and values of the self. These attitudes and values are always social in character, but they reflect varying degrees of participation in the social structure of God. By comparative standards, some of them are much less inclusive than others. The results of the activities of relatively less socialized selves are often destructive of the sociality of the whole, just as the results of the activities of relatively more socialized selves are creative of the sociality of the whole. The issue is one of the depth of the socialization of conscience--of man's fundamental means of experiencing Reality, and of attitudes and values that are internalized in this process. Man is the supremely social existential form, and his fundamental problem is that of maintaining and increasing attitudes which adequately express this social character of his being.

Sin

When the self fails to generalize itself in the role of the all-inclusive Generalized Other, the activities of the self are described from a theological point of view as "sinful." Sin is basically an individual or social act oriented toward non-generalizable, non-loving goals. That is, the sinful act is one in which a synoptic view of interconnected Reality is lacking. The measure of sin is not whether the act in question is generalizable for all individuals at all times and in all circumstances. Such a criterion is meaningless in a relative universe. The measure of sin is whether or not the act in question fits harmoniously into the organized pluralistic pattern of reality processes. If the goals being consummated in the act are in tension with or totally exclude the common goals of the generic human community, the act is sinful. The sinful act subverts generality. The sinful act is exclusive rather than inclusive. Sin is the substitution of ends relating only to the immediate gratification of the self or to the immediate welfare of a small sub-group, for the common ends belonging to the socializing activity of the Generalized Other. It is a failure of generality in the decision-making process. The sinful act denies man's ultimate freedom, which is to give himself wholly to the love and creativity of God.

To the extent that the fundamental attitudes and values of the self are an internalization of a pre-existent social process, and because the self responds to the stimuli of its environment in terms of these socially acquired attitudes and values, the qualifier "original" represents an accurate description of the dynamics of sin in the human community. Narrow and (under our definition) sinful attitudes are literally bred into the emerging self as it takes the role of the social community that is nurturing it. In this manner socially ungeneralizable and destructive attitudes are passed along from generation to generation, coinciding with the emergence of the self-consciousness of the individual. Attitudes are the springs of human response, and when attitudes are fundamentally anti-social (although socially acquired), the responses which spring from these attitudes will be sinful. It is one of the most perplexing aspects of human social existence that the very social processes in which selves come into being can generate and perpetuate attitudes that are ultimately destructive of the sociality that has given them birth. When this occurs, and the individual acts out of values and a self concept that are devoid of the broadly inclusive values of the Generalized Other, the individual is manifesting original sin. In every sense of the phrase, he is sinning out of his origins as a self.

The "original" dimensions of sin do not entirely cover the dynamics of the process of sinning. The self is not exclusively a socially-controlled "me." It includes also an "I" that is in constant dialogue with the "me." The "I" may be held responsible for which "me" is called forth as the basis of activity, and not every "me" is sinful in character. That is, personality is a multi-faceted historic route of passage in which many selves are operative within the same historic individual. The individual is not bound to any particular one of these selves. He may generalize himself in terms of socially acquired attitudes of white supremacy, for example, but he may also generalize himself in terms of socially acquired attitudes of equality. Actions springing from the former are likely to be sinful, while actions springing from the latter are likely not to be sinful. The actual response of the human individual is ultimately a deep mystery that is as yet unfathomed by scientific analysis. Causal influences and statistical predictions for groups may be charted, but the response of the individual eludes total explanation. The point to be drawn here is that the "original" character of human sin does not predetermine the sinful character of any given act. Whether or not an act is sinful is an a posteriori judgment based upon the comparison of behavioral consequences with a criterion of generality in a particular context of application.

While the basic character of sin has been described in terms of its tension with the organized and generalized interactional patterns of the Generalized Other, the consequences of sin are experienced at a much less abstract and more personal level. The occurrence of a sinful act indicates a loss of meaning, and a loss of meaning represents a fracture in the structure of Reality. This has very immediate consequences for the individual self. When the individual self responds in a manner that does not fit into the organized responses of the whole, he demonstrates his isolation from the whole. Meanings are universals to which common responses are given. When the common response of the individual is not forthcoming, the individual is not participating in that framework of meaning. Given the perspectival character of the relative universe, this means that the sinning individual is actually living in an entirely different reality (perspective) from that of his fellows. Communication breaks down, and common reality is lost. The individual is isolated in a fractured universe. He remains fundamentally dependent upon the world of common meanings, but he no longer experiences this relationship. He is alienated from the ultimate source of his being, of the meanings of his experience, and of the values that serve him best. His only way out of this isolation is through the reconstruction of himself in terms of the broader community from which his sin has isolated him.

Righteousness

The alternatives to sinful acts growing out of narrow, exclusive and socially truncated attitudes and values are acts which express broad, inclusive, and socially integrated attitudes and values. Such acts may be termed "righteous," although the terms "good" and "creative" apply equally well. The righteous act is the momentary realization of the image of God in man--the fulfillment of the self through the giving of the self in love to that process of creativity which is the ultimate source of its being, meaning, and valuation. Righteous acts increase the depth and quality of social integration. The goals sought out in righteous acts are not oppressive with respect to the acts of others, but represent a harmonious filling in with and enrichment of these acts. Righteous acts intensify the form of social organization which is the foundation of universal justice. To this extent the righteous act is performed "unto God," for it expresses the interactional social pattern that is the power of the Generalized Other in human affairs. God's own activity is ultimately most effective through the righteous human individual or social act. Reality evolves through human agency and the human community may become God's co-creative partner in the continuing emergence of Reality.

Righteous activity is as "original" to the human self as is sinful activity. The behavioral dynamics of both are alike in so far as the social acquisition of fundamental attitudes and values is concerned. The self becomes a self through the internalization of the organized sets of responses of others by means of role-taking. The internalization of highly socialized and inclusive attitudes leads to righteous activity on the part of the self. Righteousness belongs to the origins of the self every bit as much as does sin.

Righteous acts do not automatically proceed from the self whose origins and surroundings are highly socialized. The momentarily righteous self is no more totally socially controlled than is the momentarily sinful self. Social control, functioning through the "me," is but one pole of the structure of the self. The other pole is the undisciplined "I," which may enter into the dialogue with any number of the selves characterizing the historicity of the person, and which may select among a number of possibilities for the reality of the future. Socially acquired universal attitudes may at any time be subverted by socially acquired particular attitudes. One breaks the bonds of a highly socialized community by means of generalizing oneself in terms of a less socialized community, just as one may transcend the less socialized context in terms of the more socialized setting. It bears continued emphasis that the decisions and activities of the human self are ultimately mysteries, subject to the influence of both human and divine community, but lying beyond the power of either to control completely.

The typical consequences of righteous activity are the realization of more intensely socialized reality structures, a deepened sensitivity to the relational character of the Reality process, and a heightened sense of self-worth. The righteous act represents participation in God's socializing activity. Springing, as it generally does, from the attitude of the Generalized Other within the individual self, it also represents a self for whom personal existence is integrated within the context of a life-orientation that is satisfying. The source of this satisfaction is the approbation of the community, the goals of which are a part of the self and receive expression through the individual and social acts in which the self participates. To the extent that the approving community embodies the organized patterns of the Generalized Other, a communal approbation represents also the approval of God.

The approving community is not always the community of the self's immediate environment. It may be a highly abstract community, such as the "brotherhood of man," by means of which the antisocial, sinful attitudes of the more immediate community are transcended. In such a case, the immediate consequences for the self of its righteous activity may be social censure or even active social persecution. The self may suffer a great deal of physical and emotional distress at the hands of the community as a result of its righteous acts. In the final analysis, however, these are to be preferred by the self to the rupture in the self caused by the separation of attitudes and acts.

If the self sees itself primarily in terms of universal communities, but the acts of the self express only the narrowness of the attitudes of a very particularized community, the result is that the self loses its sources of valuation. The approbation of the restrictive community is without ultimate value to the self, and there is no such approbation forthcoming from the generalized communities which are the potential source of the self's values. The self becomes literally rootless, and either lapses into mental illness or undergoes some form of fundamental reconstruction so that coordination between acts and values may once again be achieved. Society--and ultimately God himself--cannot function apart from the acts of individuals who conceptualize themselves in universal terms. On the other hand, no individual self can survive apart from the approbation of some self-transcending social group. Neither the anti-social community nor the isolated self is a form of existence with anything but a very temporary life-span.

To complete the sketch of the phenomenon of righteousness being presented, note must be taken of the fact that the activities of "righteous" men (acts originating in universal attitudes) are not always consummated in the emergence of more highly socialized configurations of reality. To the extent that the consummation of an act involves means, every human act is a "social" act. Each involves the participation of entities outside of the self which offer a resistance to the self, and to that extent transcend the control of the self. In addition, the organization of means to an end requires a certain amount of information and mental manipulation of that information. Some selves are more adept at these mental processes than others. Finally, the righteous acts of a number of individuals or sub-groups may either be spatially or temporally competitive with one another. The same universal attitudes may underlie a number of acts, but the ultimate consequences may be uncreative, or even destructive of socialized Reality.

When the acts of individuals or groups which are based in the attitudes of the Generalized Other result in consequences which are characterized either by a failure to realize maximal good in a situation or by a destruction of social organization, these consequences may be attributed to the reality of evil rather than to sin.[1] Righteousness as an attitude is far from omnipotent with respect to the consummation of its goals. The dynamics of evil, however, are quite divergent from the dynamics of sin. The former has to do with forces and consequences that are largely inadvertent and beyond the control of the self, while the latter has to do with a destructive deficiency in the social structure of the self. The overcoming of evil is a problem belonging, in the widest sense of that endeavor, to technology. The overcoming of sin, on the other hand, involves the transcendence of the deficient self through the reconstitution of that self in terms of a more universal community. One such community is the "Kingdom of God."

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[1] For an analysis of the coexistence of evil (disunity and chaos) with a unified Reality, see above, chapter four, pp. 313-321.

The Notion of Revelation and Jesus of Nazareth

The Character of Revelation

Christian religious perspectives of God and the universe find one of their chief historical sources in the biblical literature concerning Jesus of Nazareth. Although this literature itself represents a pluralism of viewpoints, and subsequent theological and historical investigation of this literature has resulted in an even wider variety of interpretation and development, the career of Jesus cannot be ignored in any work of theology that attempts to go by the name of "Christian." Whatever content is read into or extrapolated from the events surrounding Jesus, it remains an historical fact that the Christian religion has emerged as a social response to his existence. The discussion of Jesus in this dissertation will necessarily fall far short of adequately dealing with the complexity of the problems surrounding the interpretation of Jesus. What will be offered is little more than a sketch of the manner in which Jesus is significant in the theological reinterpretation that is being presented. This sketch, however, should be quite suggestive of the manner in which Jesus would be treated in a more comprehensive work of Christology.

In the present context, the elementary question is: What is the theological significance of the career of Jesus within the Meadian framework of interpretation? Tradition attaches the theological notion of "revelation" to the events of the career of Jesus. These events are affirmed to be revelatory in a two-fold sense. Jesus is seen to be the revealer of the graceful disposition of God toward men, and he is also seen to be the revealer of the authentically human style of existence. He is thus the model both of God and of man, for all those who respond to him in faith. This traditional two-fold revelatory character of Jesus may be affirmed within a Meadian point of view, but only after some very fundamental observations are made concerning the character of the phenomenon of revelation.

Initially, and stated rather negatively, it goes almost without saying within a Meadian framework that the phenomenon of revelation cannot be dealt with in terms of the irruption of a supernatural divine reality into the natural reality of human experience. Revelation does not originate in a transcendental realm somewhere outside of the world of experience, from which realm it breaks into the realm of social interaction with special information of a saving character. On the contrary, the occurrence of revelation takes place within a Reality process which is relational without exception. Revelatory events, then, are events which occur in the course of normal social interaction. The revelatory event, as contrasted to the non-revelatory event, is to be

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described as that event in which the fundamental dynamics of creation and creativity stand out with particular clarity to a self or to a community of selves. The occurrence of revelation is an event in which a deepened sensitivity to the ordinary emerges, in which the cloak of being ordinary falls away and the foundations of Reality become apparent. From the standpoint of the individual self, revelation is an event very similar in character to the experience of conversion. That which is revealed is not only the activity of God in the world, but also the ultimate meaning of one's own life in the world. The revelatory event entails a fundamental reconstruction of the self. A new attitude or self-generalization emerges in the self, and this becomes the basis of the subsequent activities of the self. The individual "sees" what was previously hidden from his view, and this "seeing" coincides with the emergence of a qualitatively different orientation of his personal existence.

This brings to the fore a second characteristic of any Meadian view of revelation, which has to do with its temporal dimensions. The career of Jesus may be fixed with reasonable certainty as having taken place within the limits of a certain historical period. It is, taken as a whole, an event occurring in the past. The significance of this event--its revelatory character--may not, however, be simply plucked out of the past as though it were an independent structure of meaning. Such independence does not occur within the temporal and relational Reality described by Mead. The concreteness of the past is an hypothetical construction, in Mead's view, just as the concreteness of the future is an hypothetical construction.[1] The identity and meaning of objects and events belonging to past and future alike emerge in the consummation of the act that is occurring in the present. Thus the meaning of the revelation perceived in the career of Jesus is that which emerges in the present. Revelation has no other meaning than that which it attains in the midst of ongoing human experience, and this meaning has emergent dimensions which it could not have had in the experience of those who knew Jesus in the past.

This Meadian hermeneutic does not subvert the kind of independence belonging to the revelation perceived in Jesus as something which occurred a long time ago rather than now. As a past event, the career of Jesus infused emergent dimensions into the flow of the Reality process which maintain their continuity right up to the present. These emergent dimensions represent a part of the total causal nexus of the past, which is the context within which emergence continues to occur. They are an integral part of every reconstruction that occurs in present events. But just exactly how they impinge upon the emerging present--their revelatory content, in other words--awaits the consummation of what is currently in the process of becoming. The only route to the significance of a revelatory past, within the Meadian framework, is through its reintegration into the ongoing present. There is a certain sense of direction, or perhaps it may be stated that there are certain generic principles, which belong to the career of Jesus as an event of the past. But the concrete revelatory content of his career attains identity and meaning only as it impinges upon the here and now. The traditional notion that revelation is a "once and for all" event with its own timeless integrity and existential significance cannot be maintained from a Meadian perspective. The only way to capture the significance of revelation in historic tradition is to allow revelation to emerge in its novel relevance to the present. Thus it is that the primitive followers of Jesus could capture the significance of their Jewish heritage only by ultimately making a break with Judaism because of their perception of revelation in Jesus.

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[1] Mead's "philosophy of the present" is outlined above in chapter one, pp. 97-102.

The whole issue can also be treated from a slightly different point of reference. That which is revealed in Jesus is the foundational activity of the Generalized Other in the lives of men. The Generalized Other is not a static organizational configuration of the Reality process. It is itself a continually emerging structure, pulsating, growing, and changing through its interaction with the generic Reality process which it organizes. The Generalized Other revealed in Jesus thus represents but one phase of the life of God in his historic route of passage. That phase is superceded in a very concrete sense by God's emergent attainments in subsequent phases of his creative interaction with the several realities comprising Reality. Thus there are dimensions and intensities of the socializing activity of God which could not possibly have emerged in the revelatory life of Jesus. To fix one's attention upon revelation as it occurred only at that time is therefore to cut oneself off from God's continuing creativity. The God of Jesus is in this sense a "dead" God, belonging to a world that no longer exists. The "living" God, however, is continually engaged in creative encounter with the world, and the actuality of revelation in the present embodies encounter with the activity of the living God. The attempt to isolate instances of God's creativity as revelatory events is not misdirected. There is a definite concreteness to the occurrence of revelation, but this concreteness is always a present emergent. The misdirection occurs only when recognition of revelation occurring at one point in the Reality process blinds the human community to the fact that the significance of that revelatory event is perceived only in the events of the present--events which may ultimately emerge with revelatory content of their own.

A third characteristic of a Meadian approach to the notion of revelation is its social structure. Even though the revealing God is a unified structure, and the focus of revelation is in an individual man, and the perception of revelation in that man is a commitment of the self, it must be affirmed that the occurrence of revelation within a Meadian Reality is fundamentally a social phenomenon.

That which is revealed, generically described, is the activity of the Generalized Other maintaining and creating a unity out of the pluralism of realities comprising the relational universe. In different terminology, it is the power of love in action in the human community that is revealed, and love always occurs in a social setting. The God of Jesus is indeed One, but he finds his oneness in the process of deepening and enriching the quality of the relationships in which the diverse realities of his creation have their being. The oneness of

God is an emerging configuration of social interaction. It is the power of this emerging social configuration--the power of love--that is unveiled when revelation occurs.

Jesus is the person in whose life-activities this revelation of the power of love is perceived. In some emergent manner the events of his life and death came to represent to his followers a glimpse of the fundamental power of God at work in their midst, and the model of the quality of human being to which they would all aspire. There can be no denial of the fact that the individual man, Jesus, has become the focus of revelation in the Christian tradition throughout the years. But one must affirm, from the Meadian perspective, that the individual Jesus was a social self like other social selves. His attitudes and values have their origins in the social processes environing his continuing development as a self. It may be that as an individual he was extraordinarily open to his surroundings and perspective of what was going on about him, but the point is that the revelation of God that came into focus in the activities of his life was socially acquired. He reflected, albeit with emergent clarity, forcefulness, and effect, the power of God that was actually in effect in the events of his experience. He was a catalyst, enabling others to see what had been hidden from their view, and in his role as catalyst he was dependent upon the others who subsequently became dependent upon him.

An example may help to clarify the point. Consider the parabolic form of Jesus' teaching, specifically the parable of the "prodigal son."[1] This parable is often treated as though Jesus possessing special information about God given to him alone by God, were letting others in on this special information by relating an allegory in which the principle character represents God. But from a Meadian point of view, quite the opposite may well be the case. The parable need not be viewed as an allegory at all, but as the simple relating of an event that was a part of Jesus' experience. The loving father is not a stand-in for God, but is a man living in Judea who had some family difficulties which were resolved in the manner of the parable. If this is the case, then the revelatory dimensions of the parable are actually given to Jesus by the father who manifested love in his relationship to his erring son. The suggestion, in a general form, is this: Jesus became the focus of revelation through his deepened sensitivity to the social processes occurring around him. He came to view himself in terms of these internalized social relationships, and they became the motivation underlying his life-activities. Revelation is not born of an individual relationship to God. It is born of an immersion in the ordinary events of common human experience. From a Meadian point of view, one may hypothesize that Jesus was as dependent upon his disciples as they were upon him.

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[1] Luke 15:11-32.

This is certainly the case with respect to the recurrence of revelation subsequent to Jesus' death. The community of his followers becomes the repository of the revelation perceived in him. Revelation continues in this community, not as a duplication, but as an emergent realization of the significance of what occurred in that past. Such emergent revelation emerges in the experience of individual selves, to be sure, but these selves are dependent upon one another in a fundamental way. It is through their mutual interaction and support that they maintain the basic orientation of their existence which is revealed to them in the career of Jesus. When it comes to the concrete implications of this revelation, creativity or socializing power is the only criterion of the validity of the revelation. Creativity may be evaluated only in a generic community of selves, not merely by the individual. It is in the community at large that the response to the revelation perceived in Jesus is validated or falsified, for the ultimate "truth" of revelation is discovered in its power to deepen the quality of social interdependence. To be open to the occurrence of revelation in the present, then, is to be sensitive to God's creativity in the present on the basis of the generic characteristics of his creativity as revealed in Jesus. It is to immerse oneself in social existence in the attitude of love.

The Historical Career of Jesus

A complete analysis of the New Testament materials relative to the career of Jesus is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Instead, attention will be focused upon four aspects of Jesus' career in which revelation is apparent--his preaching of the Kingdom of God, his teaching of the law of love, his crucifixion, and his resurrection. It is hoped that this will be sufficient to suggest how the events of Jesus' career may be treated within the context of the theological perspective being developed.

Much of the content of Jesus' preaching has to do with the coming of the Kingdom of God. Functionally, the Kingdom of God is the ideal goal of human existence in which God's socializing activity reaches its consummation. Justice, order, and personal fulfillment characterize the Kingdom of God. The point of Jesus' preaching about the Kingdom of God is that it is to become the basis upon which men should repent and reconstitute their lives. The coming Kingdom, in other words, is to become the basis for a new style of interpersonal existence. In Mead's terms, it is to become that social community in terms of which the self generalizes itself, and thus become the fundamental attitude out of which springs the goal-directed activity of the self. The social values of the Kingdom of God internalized so as to become a basic part of the structure of the self is the functional equivalent of God ruling the self. The Kingdom of God is that toward which the socializing activity of God is moving, and the self in whom the Kingdom exists as a fundamental attitude becomes the co-creative partner of God in the process of Reality construction. The experience of salvation may be understood as the Kingdom of God within the self.[1]

That which characterizes the personal interaction of men who generalize themselves in terms of the Kingdom of God is love. The term is used at this point to signify a mode of interaction which transcends the phenomena of affection, sexual attraction, pleasurable preference, or leige honor (although none of these may be excluded as an aspect of the act in which love is expressed). Love is fundamentally an attitude, in Mead's sense of the term.[1] Love is the readiness of the self to find its own fulfillment in activity directed toward the well-being of others. It is a commitment to sociality, born in a self whose own structure is highly socialized. Love is not self-less, but the attitude of love places the self in the place of the other and the other in the place of the self. The act arising from the attitude of love thus seeks to consummate highly socialized values. It is informed by the ideal of justice, so that it does not become sentimental or short-sighted. But as an expression of an integrated self, neither is it detached and devoid of subjective values. The attitude of love may be described as the internalization of the attitude of the Generalized Other or God, for the activity expressing love duplicates at the individual level the socializing activity of God.

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[1] See above, p. 370.

When Jesus speaks of love he is not exhorting his followers to adopt an attitude which is foreign to the normal course of their existence. The placing of the self in the role of others is the fundamental mechanism by which the self comes into being as an object to itself. The attitude of love about which Jesus speaks is, in other words, a fundamental ontogenetic power. Nothing can be closer to the fulfillment of the self than the commitment of the self to the fulfillment of the other. In exhorting his followers to a life of love, Jesus is exhorting them to self discovery and personal fulfillment.

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[1] See above, chapter two, p. 177 ; chapter three, pp. 244-245.

In actuality, they are already loving. The exhortation, then, is toward the increased socialization of a present reality. This is accomplished through the internalization of the attitude of the Kingdom of God. The power to love, in other words, is born of participation in the structure and activity of God.

Another point around which the social response to Jesus is centered consists of the events surrounding his death by crucifixion. Jesus' crucifixion is deeply revelatory of his own commitment to the content of his preaching and teaching, the life-style that is the creative evolutionary challenge of the human social community, and the persuasive activity of God in bringing order and harmony into the emerging Reality process. Jesus conceptualized himself in terms of the Kingdom of God, and attempted to realize the ideal goals of the Kingdom through his interaction with other men. When this expression of his selfhood eventuated in danger to his own personal existence, he apparently made the value judgment that the message of the Kingdom and of love transcended in importance his own safety. The depth of his commitment is authenticated by his willingness to pursue his life-goals, even at the price of his death. In a profound sense this represents a challenge towards the reconstruction of the entire human community. Implicit in Jesus' life and death is the recognition that, unless the human community is able to offer forth a universal response to the pluralistic aspects of individual existence, there is neither safety, freedom, nor fulfillment for the individual self. Justice and brotherhood are not merely lofty ideals; they are a fundamental ontogenetic necessity. Human being is at its very base interdependent being. In the absence of justice and brotherhood, the self is relatively isolated, insecure, fettered, truncated, and without hope for a future of quality. Human social existence and the process of Reality itself continue to endure only because universal attitudes of justice and brotherhood are in fact approximated in some degree. The human problem is to increase this universal participation in organized social existence, and Jesus' life and death typifies the kind of life-style necessary to consummate this emergent socialization.

In addition, the fact that Jesus' socializing activity eventuated in his suffering and death reveals the relative power of sin and evil in the Reality process. He who would actualize the ideals of the Kingdom and of love is limited in his power, and can only persuade others to a similar commitment. Power resides in actual processes of interaction. When some of these processes are in whole or in part destructive of sociality, they represent powers against which socializing processes must struggle and over which the processes of socialization do not always prevail. The reverse side of this concrete characteristic of the Reality process is that God, as the active, organizing core of the Reality process, is himself limited in his encounters with the powers of sin and evil. God, like Jesus, is limited to persuasion. God, like Jesus, "suffers" in attempting to realize his goals. But God, also like Jesus, is faithful to his socializing task regardless of the circumstances. Thus Jesus, as the revealer of God, demonstrates hope as well as limitation.

The hope that is revealed in Jesus is traditionally attached to the event of his resurrection from the dead. The resurrection is traditionally viewed as a sign of God's involvement in Jesus' life and death, of God's approval of these events, and of God's commitment to the realization of Jesus' goals in the Reality process. It is at the same time viewed as a call for the commitment of the human community to the same goals through the reconstruction of fundamental attitudes and values. Within the Meadian framework of interpretation, one does not speak of a dead body supernaturally revivified and extracted from the tomb. The resurrection, nevertheless, retains its place of historic significance. That which was "resurrected" is a social response to Jesus--an emergent configuration of selves who are reconstructed in terms of the divine-human attitude and goals of Jesus. The corporate name of this emergent configuration is the Church, which is also very profoundly designated "the body of Christ." The Church is a fellowship of those who respond to the call of God in Jesus to join in the process of creativity in which Reality is socialized. Functionally, it is one of the chief means by which the divine-human goals of Jesus are actualized. Whatever the particular form of the Church in a particular culture or historical period, it represents the continuation and implementation of the career of Jesus. In this social sense Jesus is not dead and gone, but is alive and active in the present reality of all who conceptualize themselves in terms of the divine attitude revealed in him, and continually revealed in his body, the Church.[1]

Four Points of Christological Concern

Christology, broadly defined as the activity of cognitive reflection upon the significance of Jesus, represents the attempt to place the experienced significance of Jesus within the context of prevailing metaphysics or frameworks of world-interpretation. This is an historical activity, deeply reflective of particular spatio-temporal cultural contexts, which means that Christological notions differ according to spatial location and the passage of time. There are, however, points of concern which are continuing, spanning the differences of place and time. Four of these continuing points of concern are the concept of Atonement, the concept of Grace or the problem of Law and Gospel, the relationship of Jesus and God, and the "uniqueness" of Jesus. These areas will be outlined in the following paragraphs as they may be treated within the framework of the Meadian metaphysic.

Tradition abounds with various ideas of the nature of Atonement. Some involve the notion of a "price" to be paid, some dwell upon ontic changes which occur in man, and others dwell upon a fundamental restructuring of the ontological relationship between God and man.

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[1] The common attitude of the Generalized Other shared by a community of selves is also the behavioral phenomenon which is the referent of the theological notion of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not a supernatural entity, but is a functioning social reality. The activity of the Holy Spirit is the activity of various human communities, including the Church, which seek to actualize the Kingdom of God.

From within the Meadian framework, the first point to be made concerning the concept of Atonement is a negative one. No notion of Atonement may be entertained which entails the explicit or implicit assumption that, prior to the earthly career of Jesus, there was a fundamental separation between man and God. Atonement cannot be considered the reunification of the separated because, in our interpretive framework, there is no time after the emergence of man when God and man were apart from one another. Such a notion is inconceivable. Man comes into being as a self only through the internalization of a pattern of social interaction, and this pattern of social interaction is a part of the very structure of God. God's only being is in organized patterns of interaction, and conversely, such organized interactive patterns are the presupposition of human being.

Within this fundamental divine-human relationship there are degrees of organization, coordination, and cooperation. Viewed in terms of the relative degree of the socialization of the self, the concept of separation does have an empirical basis in reality. The reconstitution of the self in terms of the attitudes of the Kingdom of God and love, in response to encounter with Jesus or the Church's message of Jesus, does represent a definite kind of bringing together that which has been relatively (but not absolutely) separated. This is the meaning of the Atonement. It is the reconceptualization of the self in terms of the universal organization of the Generalized Other. This is in one sense an objective event in the Reality process, but is in another sense the subjective response of the self to the stimulus of the message of Jesus. It results in activity that is coordinated with, rather than opposed to or without regard to, the socializing activity of God.

The notion of Grace represents another point around which Christian theological concern has centered. There is much traditional support among interpreters of the Apostle Paul for the notion that the events of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus constitute a fundamental turning point in the relationship between God and Man.[1] Prior to the coming of Jesus, man is seen as committed to a covenant relationship with God which involves man's living his life according to a divinely bestowed Law, and according to a system of casuistry which has grown up around the Law. God's favor falls upon those who keep his Law, and his wrath falls upon those who transgress against it. Jesus, in this interpretation, institutes a novel relationship between God and man--a new covenant of Grace in which God's favor is freely bestowed upon all those who, in faith, will accept God's free gift. The alienation which is the effect of sin is no longer overcome through the ethical activities of individual men, but it is overcome through God's own activity in Jesus on behalf of all mankind. The Law, impossible of human fulfillment, is superseded by the Gospel--the good news that the barrier of sin has been removed once and for all by God himself.

Such a strong contrast of Law and Gospel or Grace cannot be sustained within the Meadian framework of interpretation. In the first place, the notion that God somehow reaches into human history and changes a fundamental ontological relationship tends to divide the unified Reality process into a realm of nature, in which the causality familiar to human experience prevails, and a realm of supernature, in which God has causal powers that are unfamiliar to human experience. The implication that the experienced dynamics of constancy and change are set aside by supernatural agency must be rejected. Also to be rejected is the implication that Grace characterizes God's relationship to the human community only occasionally, at certain specified times and places. Issue is not taken with the attempt to identify instances in which Grace is apparent, but only with the notion that God deals inconsistently with his creation.

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[1] Paul's epistles to the Romans and the Galatians are prime source material for this view.

In the second place, emphasis upon the contrast between a covenant of Law and a covenant of Grace overlooks the fact that the character of Law itself is similar to that of grace. This is not a theological notion deduced from other affirmations about the character of the Law, God's faithfulness, and the unity of the Old and New Testaments. The notion of the character of Law and its being similar to that of Grace is based upon an analysis of the dynamics of both Law and Grace from a Meadian point of view. The two relationships, it will be shown, express a similar social phenomenon.

Before this phenomenon is described, it is necessary to describe how the term "Grace" is to be understood. It has been suggested in the previous paragraph that Grace is neither supernatural in origin, sporadic in application, nor without continuity with other notions of God's mode of interaction with mankind. Grace as a theological notion represents recognition of the experienced fact that in a very fundamental sense the resources of creativity in any given event transcend the resources that belong solely to the individual self or to any particular social structure of selves. No self exists in isolation. Both the social structure of the self, and the significant meanings which are the self's means of interaction with other selves and its environment, illustrate the fundamental ontogenetic principle that individual identity is the gift of a self-transcending social context. Whatever the self is, is in large measure an emergent configuration of active relationships that is bestowed upon the self by others. Similarly, a social configuration of selves exists only by virtue of its participation in the organized interactive process of larger communities of selves.

Both individual and social sub-group existence is fundamentally dependent existence--existence that is the gift of others. What this signifies, functionally, is that the resources of the forms of social existence upon which the individual and sub-group are dependent are available to the individual and to the sub-group as a means of transcending the effects of narrowly-conceived acts which may occur in either. The universality of the transcending social process is "there" in the language utilized by the individual and the members of the sub-group for communication, thought, and the manipulation of the environment. Also "there" in the common existence of individual selves and social sub-groups is what may be termed the "momentum" of the transcending social process that is fundamental to the more particularized existential processes. A universal system of interaction is discovered among the forms of existence organized by a transcending social process.

This more universal pattern tends to perpetuate itself in the activities of the individual selves included within it, perhaps at the level of habitual response where it escapes the cognitive awareness of the individual until his completed acts are viewed in retrospect. In other words, the fact that an individual is unable in the course of completing a given act to conceptualize himself in terms of the universality of his social involvements, does not preclude the dynamics of these universal social involvements from becoming functional in his act. When this occurs, the result is an experience of Grace.

Grace may thus be described as the gift of the many to the individual, a gift grounded in the interest of the many which is at the same time the deepest and most significant interest of the individual. This is precisely the character of the Law. The Law is the product of a process of social interaction, in the course of which it becomes apparent that the fundamental welfare both of the whole group and of the individuals comprising it depends upon universal allegiance to certain patterns of social interaction. The Law emerges as a set of rules which together proscribe the kinds of behavior which are destructive of these interactive patterns. These rules are perpetuated through generations of history, wherein they become to the individual members of each new generation the gift of many forebearers for the sake of the continued well-being of the community of their descendants. In this social sense the notions of Law and Grace alike are descriptions of that which is fundamental to social existence.

However it is also the case that the universality of the Law may be diluted when rules that emerge as particularizations of the Law in a given set of historical circumstances become confused with the more fundamental dimensions of the Law, and are perpetuated without regard to changing historical conditions. When this occurs, the character of the Law as Grace becomes obscured, and the Law often becomes oppressive rather than liberating. One contrast between Law and Gospel or Grace is grounded in this kind of historical development, and to this extent the Christian tradition has not been amiss in finding a "new" divine-human relationship in its response to the career of Jesus. Jesus does not repudiate the Law, nor in actuality does the tradition of the Church. What occurs is a radicalization or repristinization of the Law, which is by contrast to the repressive use of the Law experienced as Grace. Law, as a codification of harmonious social order, is fundamental to the social ideal of the Kingdom of God.

There is another contrast between Law and Grace, however, which in the final analysis does mark them as fundamentally distinct notions. While the origin and intent of the Law reflect the dynamics of Grace, the operation of the Law falls far short of the operation of Grace. Law operates in a conservative fashion. It is foundational to social existence in that it conserves the values of the past, but Grace, by contrast, is foundational to social existence in that it is creative of the values of the future. This contrast is apparent in those instances in which aberrations from the demands of the law occur. The response of the Law at this point is some type of retribution, whether this be in the form of the exacting of a penalty from the offending individual or group, or in the form of the excluding of the offending individual or group from the larger social process within which the aberration took place. In this manner the values of the transcending social context are preserved, but at the expense of the individual or group which is to a lesser or greater extent excluded from these values. The response of Grace to the occurrence of aberration is reintegrative, rather than retributive. Grace brings the offending individual or group back into intimate relationship with the values of the transcending social process. The reintegration of the offender into the unified process against which the offense was committed is the creative possibility. It not only conserves the values of that process, but it creates new values which could not have existed prior to the aberration. It creates emergent social bonds which are stronger and more deeply established. Everything is changed subsequent to the experience of reconciliation by Grace.

The creativity of Grace may be illustrated by once again making reference to the parable of the "prodigal son." The father, who after all is the primary figure in the parable, transcends the retributive character of the Law when he receives his errant son back into his household. According to the just demands of the Law, the father's responsibility to his son was fulfilled when he gave his son the inheritance which was the son's due upon the death of the father. From this point forward, the father owed nothing to his son, nor could the son expect anything further from his father. According to the law, that is, nothing was owed or expected. But the father took the creative possibility of exercising love rather than Law. He received his son back to himself. By his act of love he healed the wounds of estrangement, and created a new relationship in which the bonds between himself and his son exhibited an emergent depth and strength. The family was never again the same. Even the second son, who had not transgressed against the law, was enabled to see in a new light the depth of the love of his father. That is the character of Grace. It restores that which has been destroyed, and in the process it creates emergent depths of social relatedness.

This leaves one final point to be made. It is valid to state, within the Meadian perspective, that the dynamics of Law and Grace are similar in that they involve bringing the resources of the many as united to the aid of the many in their individual particularity. It is also valid to point out the distinction between Law and Grace as being that of the difference between conservation and creativity. But the full impact of a Meadian treatment of the doctrine of Grace can only be felt when it is understood that Grace is to be seen as the fundamental characteristic of the interaction of God and the world. Grace is God's way of dealing with man, not just now and then, but continually. The form in which this Grace is experienced is in the interpersonal relationships of the human community. All human existence is interdependent existence, and the quality of this interdependence continually transcends the character of retribution. Aberration, evil, and retribution continually occur, to be sure, but the wounds caused by such occurrences are also bound up in the occurrence of love. The father of Jesus' acquaintance, of whom he spoke in his parable, does not represent an isolated instance of the occurrence of Grace. Families, schools, courts, and even governments manifest such instances constantly. The process of reconciliation in an attitude of love is both trying and painful, but it is also the process of creativity. In so far as Jesus is instrumental in focusing the attention of his followers upon this dimension of their existence, it may be said that Grace is revealed in his life. It is revealed as the means of the Generalized Other to actualize its creative possibilities in its project of attaining an ever-increasing degree of social integration in the concrete events of human experience. Grace is the appropriate creative response of God within the emerging Reality process, and as such it represents the cornerstone of human hope and aspiration for the future.

A third point of Christological concern focuses around the issue of Incarnation, or Jesus' ontological relationship to God. Historically, this is perhaps the central problem of the whole Christological enterprise. Its treatment is characterized by highly complex formulas abounding in such esoteric terms as "substance," "nature," "person," and more recently, "paradox." Analysis of this strand of Christological tradition far transcends the focus of this final chapter. Although it may appear to be outrageously facile, the position taken here is that the relationship of Jesus to God is not a major problem within the Meadian framework of interpretation. The "nature" of God is dynamic, and the "power" of God belongs to a functioning set of organized social relationships. The "nature" of man is also dynamic, and man's "power" also derives ultimately from a functioning set of organized social relationships. The social character of human existence is such that personhood is largely a function of the internalization of environing social processes. The unity of the person is a function of how closely the desires of the unpredictable "I" conform to the socially acquired structure of the "me." It has been established that, to the extent that any organized social process is reflected in the social "me," the self participates in the structure of God. Conversely, God is ingredient in every social self.[1] The relationship of Jesus to God, then, is constituted by the extent to which the broad organized pattern of the Generalized Other is internalized as Jesus' "me," and by the extent to which Jesus' "I" conforms to his "me" in the selection of his existential possibilities.

The testimony of the New Testament and of other sources of the early Christian tradition suggests that Jesus conceptualized himself in terms of the Kingdom of God, and that his activities were carried out in harmony with this divine social ideal. There is nothing supernatural about this relationship. Jesus is a manifestation of God to man as a very sensitive and deeply socialized self. God dwells in Jesus in the attitudes of the Kingdom of God and of love. This is a definite kind of unity with God--a unity both of structure and of purpose. Within the Meadian framework, whatever Christological affirmations are made of Jesus' relationship to God must be grounded in this fundamental structure of divine-human interaction. As an issue of historical investigation, however, it should be noted that the consistency with which Jesus was able to express the indwelling of God in himself ultimately lies beyond the historian's power of assessment. Tradition suggests that it was a highly consistent expression, and there is no apparent reason why this claim should be disputed.

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[1] See above, pp. 362-363.

A corollary to the interest of Christian tradition in the relationship of Jesus to God is the issue of the Uniqueness of Jesus. The revelation of God in the man Jesus is claimed to be the only one of its kind and unrepeatable. Within the interpretive framework of this dissertation, such an affirmation is unsupportable to the extent that it involves an appeal to the supernatural, and unnecessary to the extent that the revelation of the fundamental source of the well-being of man and the universe is clear without it. The former point has been argued intermittently throughout the present chapter and the one preceding it. The unitive view of Reality being expounded precludes the irruption of powers from another realm into the realm of human social experience. As for the latter point, the demand that the absolute uniqueness of Jesus be affirmed is grounded in a fundamental misconception regarding the truth of revelation. The truth of revelation (as of any other phenomenon) resides in the adequacy of the content of the revelation both to allow the Reality process to maintain itself in harmony and to open up new increments in the quality of social interaction.[1] The ideals of the Kingdom of God and of love are adequate to these tasks, regardless of whether or not Jesus is affirmed to be an absolutely unique manifestation of God. In other words, the authority of revelation lies in the quality of the conduct it reveals; it does not lie in the being of the revealer. An absolutely unique Jesus, were it possible to entertain that notion, would add nothing "more" to that which is revealed in him.

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[1] George Mead, "A Pragmatic Theory of Truth," Studies in the Nature of Truth, University of California Publications in Philosophy, XL (1929), 65-88.

In point of fact, there is little warrant to suppose that the revelation perceived in Jesus could not be or has not already been revealed in some other set of historical circumstances. It is certainly open to every human being, at least in principle, to conceptualize himself in terms of the universal values of the Generalized Other, and to express the unity of this self-concept with the "I" in the acts characterizing his existence. This would appear to be the goal of every individual who perceives revelation in Jesus. The uniqueness of Jesus is not found in his personal identity, although in respect to his personal identity Jesus does manifest the type of uniqueness which belongs to every individual per se. The uniqueness of Jesus is found in the social response to his existence. It is an elementary historical judgment that Jesus has become the source of revelation for a vast community of followers, and that the values which have emerged as supreme for this group have become instrumental in the forging of Western civilization. To this extent Jesus is unique.

Uniqueness, however, is not the equivalent of superiority. The social structure of the Generalized Other and the implications therein for human existence have also been revealed in other contexts, primarily in philosophy and other religions. These revelations, too, have their uniqueness and social utility. The task of the human community is not to argue the relative uniqueness of the various revelations that have occurred in the course of history. The task is rather one of implementing the generalizable aspect of these revelations for the good of the human community and of the Reality process as a whole.

The Human Response to Revelation

The basic human response to the perception of revelation in the career of Jesus is faith. Faith, in this context, is not to be understood as verbal assent to a set of doctrinal hypotheses. Neither may it be understood as entering into a mystical relationship with a world-transcending supernatural being or power. Faith is a dynamic reconstruction of the self. It is much more akin to the notion of "conversion" than it is to the notion of "belief." Faith is the internalization of the attitude of the Generalized Other. To the extent that every self is a social self, it participates in the attitude of the Generalized Other from its inception. This attitude does not, however, characterize the basic objectification of every self. The basic objectification of the self in terms of the social structure of the Generalized Other occurs when revelation becomes a compelling life-orientation for that self. Neither faith nor revelation is a static notion. Both come into being in the course of concrete life-events. Revelation does not become revelation until a self responds to it as revelation in faith. Conversely, faith is not faith until it is enacted in response to the perception of revelation.

The internalization of the attitude of the Generalized Other in faith is expressed in a style of life characterized by the continual reaffirmation of faith-revelation in the ordinary social acts of the self. The faithful self, in other words, realizes himself in making concrete the creative implications of the revelation he has perceived. He gives himself over to that process of love and creativity which is guiding the emerging Reality process. He becomes the co-creative partner of God in the task of maintaining and increasing the depth and quality of social existence. He is impelled by love into encounters and involvments which surpass the expectations of conservative social institutions--into engagement with the creative possibilities of his existence. This is not the opressive burden of the self, but is the exercising of the special freedom belonging to his creation in the image of God. Creativity expresses the very structure of the faithful self, making the faithful self the means of the actualization of Grace in the world.

Nevertheless, sin and evil also characterize the operations of the Reality process, and a part of what is revealed to the faithful self is the suffering of Jesus and the struggle of the Generalized Other to actualize its socializing goals. Thus the self stands ready in faith to execute its life-activities in terms of the broad social structure of the Generalized Other, but the self also in faith recognizes the limits of its own power to actualize the social goals it seeks. The consummation of the act often falls short of the goals that are anticipated at its inception--a truism characterising all acts grounded in all types of attitudes. The man of faith, just as all other men, must learn to measure success and failure in terms of the conditions prevailing in the context in which the act takes place.

Faith, as the internalization of the attitude of the Generalized Other, represents a beginning point for a system of ethics. As an attitude, it represents fundamental motivation and also a fundamental structure upon which an ethic can be constituted. Faith directs the attention of the self to those aspects of the field of stimulation in which the creative possibilities for social existence lie. However, faith alone is inadequate as a guide in assisting the self in the determination of which of the many alternatives open to it contains the greatest potential realization of social value. The attitude of faith must be supplemented by a system of ethical principles and guidelines. This cannot be a completed system of rules which require only application, for the near-infinite complexity of the relative and emerging universe far outdistances the ability of men to make rules and regulations. What is required is an ethical system which is informed both by the fundamentally social character of Reality as revealed in the attitudes of faith, love, and the Kingdom of God; and by the concrete dynamics of the personal relationships and of the political and social institutions which are the context of common human existence.

The ultimate criterion operative in such an ethical system would be the generalizability of its content. This does not mean susceptibility to universal application at all times and places, but it does mean that a desired activity should fit harmoniously into the overall pattern of interaction that is the Generalized Other. Values would have to be measured in a generic, as well as specific, context. Guiding principles must be generically oriented in their fundamental conception. Techniques of decision-making for the concrete implementation of values and guiding principles must also reflect a sense of the generic along with a sense of the concrete. Creative justice, good, and beauty are all relative concepts, but each can be actualized only within a context of generic organization and structure. The task of constructing such an ethic is highly complex, but the point being emphasized is both simple and basic: Adequate faithful response to Christian revelation is an ethical way of life directed towards the creative, concrete actualization of universal dimensions of the Generalized Other which exist in the present only as ideal possibilities.

Faith and an ethical way of life represent responses to revelation that are more individual in character. There is also a basically social response to revelation that may be termed "organized religion." When so-called "Christian" culture is being considered, organized religion refers to the institution of the Church in its many forms of historical existence. The Church is the historical social response to the career of Jesus. It has become the center of public worship, the custodian of the documents of the primitive Christian community, the arbitrator of disputes concerning the interpretation of revelation, and the center from which the proclamation of revelation emmanates. Ecclesiology is a large field of endeavor within Christian theology, and is marked by a great deal of debate

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concerning the authority of the Church, the nature of its sacraments, its necessity as a response to revelation, etc. From within the Meadian framework, however, the important point to be made concerning the Church has to do with its function as a stimulus to the self-affirmation and faithful living of its members.[1] This function is most apparent in the corporate worship of the Church.

One of the basic forms of corporate worship is prayer. Within the Meadian framework, prayer can neither be viewed as personal communion with a transcendental God, nor as an appeal to a transcendental God to alter the course of the events of Reality. God, the Generalized Other, is not personal in the sense that men are persons. God is the condition or ground of human personality, but is himself a world-organizing structure of interactive relationships. Nevertheless, a form of dialogue does take place in the activity of prayer. It is the dialogue of the "I" with the "me," the self conversing with itself in the role of the Generalized Other. In this conversation attention is focused upon the commitment of the self to the creativity of the Generalized Other, which is another way of stating that attention is focused upon the attitude of the Generalized Other within the self. Whether the prayer is one of thanksgiving, confession, intercession, or supplication, it is the attitude of the Generalized Other that is the prime focus of attention.

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[1] If Thomas Luckmann (The Invisible Religion, pp. 77-106) is correct, this function of the Church is vastly diminished in the contemporary period. He suggests that the forces of institutional specialization and consumer orientation have displaced the religious value of the institutional Church. Its place has been taken over by private religious opinion and the support of small groups such as family, friends, and even wife-swapping groups! This is noted as of special interest because Luckmann writes out of a Meadian orientation.

The response to prayer is not the irruption of a transcendent God into the events of the Reality process, but Reality is nevertheless altered by prayer. This is because prayer is not an isolated act, but takes place within the context of a whole life-orientation. If the form of prayer is dialogue with the Generalized Other within the self, the content of prayer is the future activity of the self. Prayer is at base a declaration of an intention to act as an expression of one's faithfulness to his perception of revelation. It is self-enlistment in the quest for the recurrence of creativity. If it is a prayer of thanksgiving, one is also implicitly declaring his renewed commitment to the source of his blessing. If it is a prayer of confession, the implicitly declared intention is to reintegrate the self and to enact the attitude of love. If it is an intercessory prayer, the declaration is an intention to become part of the process of meeting the need. If it is a prayer of supplication, one is enlisting himself in his own behalf, after first having examined his request in terms of the inclusive dimensions of the Generalized Other. The presence in the activity of prayer of others who share one's own fundamental attitude helps focus attention upon that which is social in human existence, and it helps reinforce the resolution of individuals to actualize the ideal goals that are an integral part of the structure of the self.

Another aspect of corporate worship is the recitation of the history of revelation, and a leader's interpretation of the significance of this history for contemporary existence. This activity is almost self-explanatory. It is another means of focusing the attention of the self upon the ultimate source of its being, meanings, and values. Here again, the goal is the actualization of creative justice and good.

The heart of Christian corporate worship is the administration of the sacraments, especially of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This sacrament has much the same value as a reminder as does reading from the Bible or hearing a sermon, but beyond this it is in its own right deeply symbolic of the fundamentally social character of human existence. The bread is symbolic of Jesus' body, and the wine of his blood. Jesus' body and blood are ingested in the course of the sacrament. This is an enactment, in a symbolic form, of the fundamental ontogenetic principle that selfhood is attained only by first becoming another. Just as Jesus revealed God by conceptualizing himself in the role of the Generalized Other, the worshipping individual symbolizes a similar commitment or attitude by "becoming" Jesus. It is both an acknowledgement of the dependence of the self upon God, and a declaration of the commitment of the self to the ends of the Kingdom of God.

In a similar fashion, the adult form of administration of the sacrament of baptism symbolizes the reconstitution of the self with the attitude of the Generalized Other. The water washes away the old self, and a new self emerges as the co-creative partner of God in the process of the reconstruction of Reality. In its infant form of administration, baptism represents a profound recognition of the socially interdependent character of existence. Infant baptism symbolizes the attitude of the congregation that it will deport itself in such a fashion that the novel self emerging within it will internalize the attitude of the Kingdom of God. This represents a recognition of corporate responsibility in an interdependent world, and affords another instance of worship stimulating both self-affirmation and renewed commitment to a style of life which manifests the ideals of the Generalized Other.

Summary

The foregoing pages represent an effort to outline the basic characteristics of a new system of theological interpretation. As an embryonic attempt, it manifests the undeveloped character of the embryo. It is incomplete and unfulfilled. Great issues involving subtle distinctions and intricate interpretations have been passed over in a brief page or even in a single paragraph. Whole histories have been ignored. The omissions are astounding, and the author is painfully aware of this fact.

Yet, on the other hand, this is precisely what is to be expected from the embryonic endeavor. The embryo is by definition a beginning. A beginning cannot be complete. It must struggle and grow into its fullness. The important characteristic of the embryo is its potential, the future that lies before it. One simply assumes that proper care will be exercised in nurturing it along its course to maturity. The potential of the embryo is grounded in the integrity of that organization and form which it does manifest. The purpose of this dissertation is the presentation of this embryonic form and organization. It is an attempt to picture, in a preliminary way, a theological option for the future. This option, as an embryo, manifests both points of continuity and of discontinuity with the past. If both the points of continuity and a coherent basis for the points of discontinuity are demonstrated, then the task of the dissertation is accomplished.

The controlling category in the embryonic theological perspective being described is the Generalized Other. The Generalized Other, as an organized structure of interactive processes, is the unity of the Reality process as a whole, and the ultimate source of human being, meaning, and valuation. The suggestion is that this functional ordering process is the behavioral referent of the theological concept of God. The universal interdependence of this process and other processes of reality has been described in some detail. Special attention has been devoted to the interdependent relationship between the Generalized Other and those interactive processes peculiar to the human form of existence. It has been shown that traditional doctrinal attempts to deal with these relationships between God and man lend themselves to reinterpretation in terms of the category of the Generalized Other.

From the standpoint of human religious response, revelation has been described as the perception, within the normal events constituting human experience, of the interactive dynamics fundamental both to the Reality process as a whole and to human being in particular. It has been shown how a number of traditional theological affirmations relating to the career of Jesus of Nazareth are in fact descriptive of these fundamental interactive dynamics. The attitude of faith has been discussed in terms of the reconstitution of the self as a reflection of the Generalized Other that has become apparent in revelation. It has further been shown how, in the attitude of faith, the Generalized Other upon which the self is in fact already dependent may become the means whereby the life-activities of the self become more creative and the quality of selfhood is deepened. To the faithful self, the attitude of the Generalized Other represents the sanctification of the generic Reality process, the motivation to participate creatively in this process, a criterion for criticizing particular aspects of the process which are destructive, and a ground upon which to maintain hope for the future. The activities and rituals of traditional organized religion are interpreted as stimuli which aid the self in reaffirming its fundamental attitude of the Generalized Other.

This is not the entire picture, but it represents a well-rounded and coherent beginning. Christian theology can be done in the context of meaning represented by the metaphysic of George Herbert Mead. There may even be advantages to doing theology within this perspective. The beginning has been made. Its growth depends upon further analysis of its advantages and disadvantages in the market-place of theological ideas.

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D. Unpublished Mead Material*

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Castle's letters concerning and to Mead, and Mead's essay on Castle.

Mead, George Herbert. "The Papers of George Herbert Mead (1863-1931)."

This collection contains the manuscripts, student notes, etc., which are the basis for the publication of Mead's posthumous volumes. Manuscripts of some of his published articles are also included, together with editorial correspondence concerning the compiling of *The Philosophy of the Act*.

________. Electrostatic copies of some of Mead's letters that have been in the possession of Mrs. Henry C. A. Mead, Birdwood, Ocean Springs, Mississippi.

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*These collections are to be found in the Harper Memorial Library at the University of Chicago.

________. "Mead, George H., The President's Papers."
Mead's correspondence as chairman of the board of the Hospital School for Abnormal Children. Also two letters by John Dewey which refer to Mead.

"The Papers of Henry Northrup Castle (1862-1895)."
Includes fourteen letters from Mead to various members of the Castle family. Box No. Five, Folder No. Ten.

II. Secondary Material Regarding Mead and His Thought, with Selected Annotation.*

A. Relatively Comprehensive Exposition and Analysis

Lee, Grace Chin. George Herbert Mead: Philosopher of the Social Individual. New York: King's Crown Press, 1945.
Good, clear, and concise exposition of the main themes and ideas contained in MSS, PA, and PP. Somewhat weak in the integration of these. Especially questionable is her attempt to interpret Mead in terms of a balancing of the fundamental notions of the act and sociality. It is doubtful that these notions can be related by contrast within the confines of Mead's thinking.

Morris, Charles W. "Introduction." The Philosophy of the Act. George Herbert Mead. Edited, with an Introduction, by Charles W. Morris, in collaboration with John M. Brewster, Albert M. Dunham, and David L. Miller. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938. Pp. vii - lxxiii.
While this introduction related primarily to PA, and does not deal directly with the rest of the Meadian corpus, it is still perhaps the best and most integrative analysis of the roots and fundamental assumptions of Mead's generic thought. Citing some of Mead's published works, Morris attempts to demonstrate that Mead's life-work exhibits a definite unity and continuity of development. He rejects the rather prevalent notion that Mead's cosmology is the child of his social psychology. The foundational and integrative character of Morris' introduction approximates, more closely than any other examined work, the character of the analysis presented in this dissertation. It also does a good job of placing Mead in historical perspective.

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*This is by far the most extensive secondary bibliography of Mead material that has as yet come into print. Within the confines of the English language and the focus of the treatment of Mead in this dissertation, it may be regarded as being very nearly complete.

Natanson, Maurice. The Social Dynamics of George H. Mead. Washington, D. C.: Public Affairs Press, 1956.

A very fragmented treatment of Mead, marked by extensive usage of "ism" labels that are often unclear, and lacking in a synoptic vision of the generic characteristics of Mead's thought. Greatly handicapped by its forced treatment of MSS, PA, and PP as chronologically distinct stages in the development of Mead's thinking, an error which might have been avoided if the author had paid more attention to Mead's published material. As a result, Natanson finds a lot of inconsistency in Mead, a judgment in which he is nearly alone among interpreters of Mead. The final portions of this work seem to be more an apology for Husserl's phenomenology than an assessment of Mead.

Pfuetze, Paul E. Self, Society, Existence. With a Forward by H. Richard Niebuhr. Harper Torchbooks. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954.

Pfuetze's fundamental interest lies in the notion of the social self, so his treatment lacks balance, but it does cover most of the spectrum of Mead's thinking in at least a skeletal fashion. The exposition is adequate, but the interpretive portions suffer greatly from the author's failure to recognize the importance of the notion of relativity in Mead. The book is quite important in that it is one of the few works in which Mead's thought is brought into confrontation with another major philosopher (Martin Buber), and because it is also one of the few works on Mead which includes a theological interest. From a theological point of view, Pfuetze reaches some negative conclusions regarding Mead's theory of the social self.

Reck, Andrew J. "The Constructive Pragmatism of George Herbert Mead." Recent American Philosophy. Pantheon Books. New York: Random House, 1964. Pp. 84-122.

This article is essentially a reprint of "The Philosophy of George Herbert Mead."

________. "Introduction." Selected Writings. George Herbert Mead. Edited, with an Introduction, by Andrew J. Reck. Library of Liberal Arts. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1964. Pp. xiii-lxii.

Although quite brief, this is a very good general introduction to Mead's thought. It places Mead in both historical and contemporary perspective with respect to other philosophers of similar outlook. Weakened by its compartmentalized approach to Mead, which tends to obscure the integrity of the man's thought.

________. "The Philosophy of George Herbert Mead (1863-1931)." *Tulane Studies in Philosophy*, XII (1963), 5-51.

This article is basically expository in character, and the exposition is good as far as it goes. It contains a general description of Mead's "constructive pragmatism," and then proceeds to outline the notions of the act, the mind, time, and reality. The treatment as a whole lacks integration, however, and is deficient in conveying the systematic unity of Mead's thinking. Reck does attempt to get at the basic root of Mead's thought, and identifies this root as the concept of the act. A fuller statement of Mead's position would require more attention directed toward the root-character of the notions of emergence, relativity, and sociality.

Tremmel, William C. "The Social Concepts of George Herbert Mead." *Emporia State Research Studies*, V (June, 1957), 3-35.

The author's stated purpose in writing this article is to provide a "purely introductory" treatment of Mead because of Mead's general obscurity, on the one hand, and his right to acclaim, on the other. He does an excellent job of fulfilling his purpose. The article is almost totally expository in character, and the exposition is clear and faithful to Mead. Mead's major ideas receive good clarification. One might criticize the weakness of integration and summation in Tremmel's treatment, but these tasks actually transcend his intent.

Victoroff, David. *G. H. Mead: Sociologue et Philosophe*. Paris: *Presses Universitaires de France*, 1953.

This work is largely expository in character, and its over-all quality is good. The author correctly perceives the importance of emergent evolution and relativity in Mead's thinking. He emphasizes the sociological dimension of Mead, and tends to interpret his philosophical side as an outgrowth of his sociological thinking. This reflects a less than adequate appreciation of the unity of Mead's thought and career.

B. General and Introductory Material

Ames, Van Meter. "George Herbert Mead, an Appreciation." *University of Chicago Magazine*, XXIII (June, 1931), 370-372.

Barry, Robert M. "A Man and a City: George Herbert Mead in Chicago." *American Philosophy and the Future*. Edited by Michael Novak. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968.

This article makes the point that Mead's thought demonstrates how thought forms are positively correlated to forms of life--in this case, to Mead's involvement in the affairs of urban Chicago.

Benjamin, A. C. "*La philosophie en Amérique entre les deux guerres*." *L'activite philosophique contemporaine en France et aux Etats-Unis*. M. Farber. *Tome* 1. Paris: *Presses Universitaires de France*, 1950. Pp. 1-29.

Blau, Joseph L. "Social Behaviorism: George Herbert Mead." *Men and Movements in American Philosophy*. Prentice-Hall Philosophy Series. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952. Pp. 262-273.

A general introduction to Mead, of questionable quality. Blau is weak on perspectives, and dead wrong on the generalized other, which he describes as "any other participant in a common activity."

Child, Arthur. "The Theoretical Possibilities of the Sociology of Knowledge." *Ethics*, LI (July, 1941), 392-418.

Desmonde, William H. "George Herbert Mead." *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 1967. Vol. V.

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Mead, the man, in the eyes of his closest colleague.

________. "George Herbert Mead as I Knew Him." *University of Chicago Record*, XVII (1931), 174-175.

________. "Prefatory Remarks." *The Philosophy of the Present*. Edited, with an Introduction, by Arthur E. Murphy, with Prefatory Remarks by John Dewey. Lectures upon the Paul Carus Foundation, Third Series. Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1932.

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Miller, David L. "Two Unpublished Papers." *Review of Metaphysics*, XVII (June, 1964), 511-514.

Obituary. *Monist*, XLI (July, 1931), 471.

Obituary. *Philosophical Review*, XL (July, 1931), 410.

Petras, John W. "George Herbert Mead: An Introduction." George Herbert Mead: Essays on His Social Philosophy. Edited, with an Introduction, by John W. Petras. New York: Teachers' College Press, 1968. Pp. 1-23.

Shibutani, Tamotsu. "George Herbert Mead." International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. 1968. Vol. X.

Smith, T. V. "George Herbert Mead." Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. 1933. Vol. X.

Stevens, Edward. "Bibliographical Note." American Journal of Sociology, LXXII (March, 1967), 551-557.

Contains a near-complete bibliography of Mead's literary legacy. Also lists and describes the remaining unpublished Mead materials, and notes where they are being stored. Summarizes the current progress of Mead studies, and suggests that the work done thus far generally manifests an over-reliance upon the posthumously published material. Stevens offers concise and pertinent criticism of the Mead analyses of Lee, Natanson, Pfuetze, Reck, and Victoroff.

Tufts, J. H. "Extracts from the Address at Mead's Funeral." University of Chicago Record, XVII (1931), 177-178.

University of Chicago. George Herbert Mead. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931.

Victoroff, David. "Aspects originaux de la philosophie de G. H. Mead." Revue de Metaphysique et de Morale, LVI (October-December, 1951), 67-81.

The title promises more than the article delivers, which is simply a brief description of several of Mead's prominent ideas.

Wallace, David. "Reflexions on the Education of George Herbert Mead." American Journal of Sociology, LXXII (January, 1967), 396-408.

This article contains mostly biographical material, drawing heavily upon the letters of Henry Northrup Castle, Mead's college friend and subsequent brother-in-law. Most of the content of the quoted letters deals with Castle, however, and with Mead only by inference from their close association.

Werkmeister, W. H. "Mead's Philosophy of the Act." A History of Philosophical Ideas in America. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1949. Pp. 521-540.

Williams, R. "*La psychologie sociale aux États-Unis*." *Cahiers internationaux de Sociologie*, III (1947), 68-88.

Woodard, J. "*Psychologie sociale*." *La Sociologie au XXe siècle*. Edited by G. Gurvitch and W. E. Moore. Paris: *Presses Universitaires de France*, 1947. Vol. I, pp. 223-271.

C. Material Related to Particular Aspects of Mead's Thought

Ames, Van Meter. "Buber and Mead." *Antioch Review*, XXVII (Summer, 1967), 181-191.

Ames is not deeply analytical in his approach, but the article is of value for its sensitivity to the religious quality of some of Mead's thinking.

________. "Freedom and Responsibility." *Religious Humanism*, III (1969), 112-114.

________. "Mead and Husserl on the Self." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, XV (March, 1955), 320-331.

________. "Mead and Sartre on Man." *Journal of Philosophy*, LIII (March 15, 1956), 205-219.

________. "Zen to Mead." *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, XXXIII (1959-1960), 27-42.

Baumann, Bedřich. "George Herbert Mead and Luigi Pirandello: Some Parallels Between the Theoretical and Artistic Presentation of the Social Role Concept." *Social Research*, XXXIV (September, 1967), 563-607.

Baumann is sensitive to the ambiguity of the concept of role, so he does not attempt any more than the description of parallels. He ranks Mead right with Hegel and Marx as a great figure in the history of dialectics, and suggests that Marxist social thought is in need of supplementation by Mead's thought. Baumann is from Czechoslovakia.

Bittner, C. J. "G. H. Mead's Social Concept of the Self." *Sociology and Sociological Research*, XVI (September-October, 1931), 6-22.

Bittner is lavish in his praise of Mead, but is also deeply critical of the objective character of the social self. He misinterprets role-taking as involving reasoning by analogy. In Bittner's opinion, the generalized other is nothing but a conceptual abstraction.

Blumer, Herbert. "Sociological Implications of the Thought of George Herbert Mead." *American Journal of Sociology*, LXXI (March, 1966), 533-548.

Excellent and penetrating capsule analysis of the fundamental significance of Mead's "implicit" theory of society, by the man who took over the teaching of Mead's course in Social Psychology after his death. Includes a brief "comment" by Robert F. Bales, and Blumer's reply. For further dialogue concerning this article, see "Commentary and Debate," *American Journal of Sociology*, LXXII (January, 1967), 409-412.

Bowman, Andrew Lawrence. "Meaning and Nature: George H. Mead's Theory of Objects." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1951.

Bowman focuses his analysis upon *PA* and *PP*. He judges Mead as "inadvertently solipsistic" in his cosmology, and suggests that his position generates as many problems as it solves.

Brewster, John M. "A Behavioristic Account of the Logical Function of Universals: I." *Journal of Philosophy*, XXXIII (September 10, 1936), 505-514.

Brewster claims to follow Mead closely, which he does, but also claims to go beyond Mead in finding meaning in "non-social" behavior. The concept of non-social behavior is extremely questionalbe, within Mead's thought, and it further appears that Mead actually does treat the concept of meaning at the levels where Brewster suggests it is not to be found.

________. "A Behavioristic Account of the Logical Function of Universals: II." *Journal of Philosophy*, XXXIII (September 24, 1936), 533-547.

Brings out the assertion that the self is perhaps more a critical reactor to the generalized other than it is a duplication of the generalized other. Criticizes Mead for not explaining how symbols become common or inter-subjective.

Broadrick, K. W. "G. H. Mead's Social Behaviorist's Account of Language Communication: A Reconstruction with Some Implications for Public Speaking." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1950.

Brotherton, Bruce W. "The Genius of Pragmatic Empiricism: II." *Journal of Philosophy*, XL (January 21, 1943), 29-39.

Brotherton is highly critical of Mead for allowing what he terms his "philosophical realism" to obscure the biological dimensions of his pragmatism. This results, according to Brotherton, in excessive weighting of the social process in Mead's thinking. The actual unity of the act and the foundation of universals is alleged to be found in the biological individual, which Mead is accused of obscuring.

Churchhill, Jordan Maurice. "Moral Judgment and Self-Knowledge." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1956.
Churchhill criticizes Mead's theory of the self as being narrow in its exclusion of the realm of the ideal from consideration.

Clayton, Alfred Stafford. *Emergent Mind and Education: A Study of George H. Mead's Bio-Social Behaviorism from an Educational Point of View*. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers' College, Columbia University, 1943.

Coutu, Walter. "Role-Playing Vs. Role-Taking: An Appeal for Clarification." *American Sociological Review*, XVI (April, 1951), 180-187.

Desmonde, William Herbert. *Self-Actualization: Loving and Strategic*. Boston: Eagle Enterprises, 1951.

Doan, Frank Mellor. "Emergence and Organized Perspectives: A Study in the Philosophy of George Herbert Mead." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1952.

________. "Notations on G. H. Mead's Principle of Sociality with Special Reference to Transformations." *Journal of Philosophy*, LIII (September 27, 1956), 607-616.
Doan is opposed to the extension of the notion of sociality beyond the psychological realm and into the realm of physical nature. He is highly critical of Mead's attempt to do so, on the basis of the operations used by mathematicians, which he rightly accuses Mead of failing to employ.

________. "Remarks on G. H. Mead's Conception of Simultaneity." *Journal of Philosophy*, LV (February 27, 1958), 203-209.

Falardeau, I. C. "*Personne Humaine et société*." *Bulletin de la Société de Philosophie de Bordeaux*, V (1950), 40-43.

Faris, Ellsworth. "The Social Psychology of George Mead." *American Journal of Sociology*, XLIII (November, 1937), 391-403.
Not an analytical article, but a series of brief impressions by one of Mead's former students.

XUM

Fen, Sing-Nan. "Presentation and Re-Presentation: A Discussion of Mead's Philosophy of the Present." *Philosophical Review*, LX (October, 1951), 545-550.

Germani, G. "*El 'behaviorismo social' de* G. H. Mead." *Revista Internacional de Sociologia*, X (1952), 353-358.

Gurvitch, Georges. "*Psychologie collective et psychologie de la connaissance*. *L'année sociologique*, *3e série* (1948-1949), 171-175.

Holmes, Eugene Clay. *Social Philosophy and the Social Mind: A Study of the Genetic Methods of J. M. Baldwin, G. H. Mead, and J. E. Boodin*. New York: By the Author, 1942.

A good, thumbnail sketch of many of Mead's more important ideas, but it omits mention of the generalized other.

Kahn, Paul. "*Le symbole dans la psychologie sociale* de G. H. Mead." *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie*, VI (1949), 134-149.

An excellent article! Kahn describes a few basic Meadian themes, and then proceeds to some clear and accurate exposition of the character and dynamics of symbolization in Mead's thought.

Kessler, Herbert. "Basic Factors in the Growth of Mind and Self: Analysis and Reconstruction of George Herbert Mead's Theory." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1940.

Kolb, William L. "A Critical Evaluation of Mead's 'I' and 'Me' Concepts." *Social Forces*, XXII (March, 1944), 291-296.

Kolb accuses Mead of using the "I" as a wastebasket category to explain all individual differences which cannot be explained by the taking of organized social roles. He suggests omitting the category of the "I" from Mead's system, and re-examining the residue for which the "I" is supposed to account from the perspective of Abram Kardiner's notion of the "basic personality structure."

Laguna, Grace A. de. "Communication, the Act, and the Object with Reference to Mead." *Journal of Philosophy*, LXIII (April 25, 1946), 225-238.

This article is deficient in its appreciation of the importance of sociality in Mead's thinking, especially of the importance of the generalized other and common perspectives.

Lee, Harold N. "Mead's Doctrine of the Past." Tulane Studies in Philosophy, XII (1963), 52-75.

An excellent, penetrating analysis. Not only does Lee manifest a fundamental grasp of the roots of Mead's idea of the past, but his writing style is also very expressive. Easily the best analysis of its subject matter in print.

McGary, John Keith. "Sources, Nature, and Educational Implications of George Herbert Mead's Theories of the Self and Society." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University School of Education, 1943.

McKinney, David W. "Problems of the Self in the Light of the Psychopathology of Schizophrenia." Psychiatry, XIV (August, 1951), 331-339.

A beginning attempt to supplement Mead's self theory with attention to non-symbolic levels of experience.

McKinney, John C. "The Contribution of George H. Mead to the Sociology of Knowledge." Social Forces, XXXIV (December, 1955), 144-149.

An extremely concise and well-written summation of the major dimensions of MSS, although the reconstructive character of thought and the phenomenon of emergence are given less than their due in emphasis.

________. "George Herbert Mead and the Philosophy of Science." Philosophy of Science, XXII (October, 1955), 264-271.

Concise, but comprehensive, readable, and faithful to Mead.

________. "Methodological Convergence of Mead, Lundberg, and Parsons." American Journal of Sociology, LIX (May, 1954), 565-574.

________. "Systematic Sociological Theory in the United States: An Exposition, Analysis, and Synthesis of the Methodological and Substantive Positions of G. H. Mead, Talcott Parsons, and G. A. Lundberg." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State College, 1953.

Meltzer, Bernard N. "Mead's Social Psychology." Symbolic Interaction. Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967. Pp. 5-24.

A generally good introduction to the indicated subject matter. Meltzer's critique at the end points out areas in which Mead does in fact appear to be unclear.

Miller, David L. "De Laguna's Interpretation of G. H. Mead." Journal of Philosophy, XLIV (March, 1947), 158-162.

________. "G. H. Mead's Conception of 'Present.'" *Philosophy of Science*, X (January, 1943), 40-46.
Excellent on the character of the notion of "emergence" and its foundational position in Mead's thinking.

Mitchell, E. T. "Metaphysics and Science." *Philosophy of Science*, XIII (October, 1946), 274-280.
An examination of the relationship of the two, and a defense of metaphysical thinking. Mead's *PP* is described and set forth as an example of good metaphysics.

Miyamoto, S. Frank, and Dornbusch, Sanford M. "A Test of Interactionist Hypotheses of Self-Conception." *American Journal of Sociology*, LXI (March, 1956), 399-403.

Moore, Merritt Hadden. "Introduction," *Movements of Thought in the Nineteenth Century*. George H. Mead. Edited, with an Introduction, by Merritt H. Moore. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936. Pp. v-xxxvii.
While largely restricted to Mead's handling of nineteenth century thought, Moore's introduction is also good on the roots of Mead's own thinking, and on Mead's concepts of the past and the self.

Moreno, J. L. "Sociometry and the Social Psychology of G. H. Mead." *Sociometry*, X (1947), 350-353.

________. *Sociometry, Experimental Method, and the Science of Society*. New York: Beacon House, Inc., 1951. Pp. 118-122, 217.

Morris, Charles W. "Introduction." *Mind, Self and Society*. George Herbert Mead. Edited, with an Introduction, by Charles W. Morris. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934. Pp. ix-xxxv.
In addition to being an excellent introduction to Mead's social psychology, Morris' introduction also does a good job of placing Mead in historical context. Morris notes the unfolding unity of Mead's thinking, and also rejects the rather common opinion that the "I" is swallowed up in the "me" in the structure of the self as presented by Mead.

________. "Peirce, Mead and Pragmatism." *Philosophical Review*, XLVII (March, 1938), 109-123.

________. "Pragmatism and Metaphysics." *Philosophical Review*. XLIII (November, 1934), 549-564.

________. *Signs, Language and Behavior*. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1946. Pp. 39-49.
A brief description is offered of Mead's theory of signs and significant symbols.

Murphy, Arthur E. "Concerning Mead's Philosophy of the Act." *Journal of Philosophy*, XXXVI (February 16, 1939), 85-103.

Murphy understands Mead to have based the whole of his thinking upon the philosophical ultimacy of the category of the act. Murphy denies that there is any such reality as a basic activity, and suggests that Mead's reductionistic forcing of the category of the act upon the empirical data obscures his true contribution to thought, which is his contextual theory of meaning.

________. "Introduction." *The Philosophy of the Present*. George Herbert Mead. Edited, with an Introduction, by Arthur E. Murphy, with Prefatory Remarks by John Dewey. Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1932. Pp. xi-xxxv.

In addition to providing a good understanding of the notions of time, evolution, relativity, sociality, and emergence, which are the fundamental subject matter of these lectures, Murphy also briefly describes what he suggests are the three fundamental "tendencies" characterizing Mead's generic thought. These are the placing of the objects of knowledge within experience, the denial that there is any ultimate reference beyond the ultimacy of experience itself, and the interpretation of the social and psychological process as a natural occurrence without remainder.

Natanson, Maurice. "The Concept of the Given in Peirce and Mead." *Modern Schoolman*, XXXII (January, 1955), 143-157.

________. "George Herbert Mead's Metaphysic of Time." *Journal* of Philosophy, L (December 3, 1953), 770-782.

________. "Phenomenology from the Natural Standpoint: A Reply to Van Meter Ames." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, XVII (December, 1956), 241-245.

Nieman, Lionel J., and Hughes, James W. "The Problem of the Concept of Role: A Re-Survey of the Literature." *Social Forces*, XXX (1951), 141-149.

Quarantelli, E. L., and Cooper, Joseph. "Self-Conceptions and Others: A Further Test of Meadian Hypotheses." *Sociological Quarterly*, VII (Summer, 1966), 281-297.

The most recent of several attempts to define operationally and to test the role-taking aspect of Mead's theory of the self. The authors summarize previous attempts, and their study tends to corroborate two fairly common conclusions. First, it is very difficult to operationalize Mead's theory, but it can be done. Second, self-conception and the responses of others do seem to be positively related, but the self-concept has more to do with the self's *perception* of the responses of others than with their *actual* response.

Reeder, Leo J., Donohue, George A., and Biblarz, Arturo. "Conceptions of Self and Others." *American Journal of Sociology*, LXVI (September, 1960), 153-159.

Smith, T. V. "George Herbert Mead and the Philosophy of Philanthropy." *Social Service Review*, VI (March, 1932), 37-54.

________. "The Religious Bearings of a Secular Mind." *Journal of Philosophy*, XII (April, 1932), 200-213.

Smith notes Mead's rejection of the dogmatic aspects of his puritan heritage, but he also notes the persistence throughout his career of some of the other aspects of that heritage. Without using the term, Smith shows how Mead's life and thought are both religious in a functional sense. One of the few articles dealing with Mead from a religious point of view.

________. "The Social Philosophy of George Herbert Mead." *American Journal of Sociology*, XXXVII (November, 1931), 368-385.

A succession of rambling, but frequently helpful, personal remembrances of Mead, and generalizations about his thought. Points out Mead's realistic approach to the problem of the amelioration of the anti-social qualities of existing communities of social selves.

Stevens, Edward. "Sociality and Act in George Herbert Mead." *Social Research*, XXXIV (Winter, 1967) 613-631.

Stevens, figuratively speaking, does a good job of bringing the bride and groom to the door of the church. Unfortunately, he leaves them at the threshhold before their union can officially be established.

Strauss, Anselm. "Introduction." *George Herbert Mead on Social Psychology: Selected Papers*. Edited, with an Introduction, by Anselm Strauss. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964. Pp. vii-xxv. First edition published under the title: *The Social Psychology of George Herbert Mead*. Phoenix Books. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956.

Strauss' thesis is that Mead has frequently been misinterpreted by various sociologists, and he attempts to refocus the thinking of such men.

Strong, Samuel M. "A Note on George H. Mead's 'The Philosophy of the Act.'" *American Journal of Sociology*, XLV (July, 1939), 71-76.

Strong is one of the interpreters of Mead who sees the unity of his thought from beginning to end.

Stryker, Sheldon. "Attitude Ascription in Adult Married Offspring-Parent Relationships: A Study of the Social Psychological Theory of G. H. Mead." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1955.

________. "Relationships of Married Offspring and Parent: A Test of Mead's Theory." American Journal of Sociology, LXII (November, 1956), 308-319.

Swanson, Guy E. "Mead and Freud: Their Relevance for Social Psychology." Sociometry, XXIV (December, 1961), 319-339.

This is a very good and well-conceived analytical comparison. Swanson concludes that the approaches of the two men complement one another, and suggests how this is the case.

Tonness, Alfred. "A Notation on the Problem of the Past--with Especial Reference to George Herbert Mead." Journal of Philosophy, XXIX (October, 1932), 599-606.

Troyer, William Lewis. "Mead's Social and Functional Theory of Mind." American Sociological Review, XI (April, 1946), 198-202.

Ushenko, Andrew P. "Alternative Perspectives and the Invariant Space-Time." Mind, XLIII (April, 1934), 199-203.

Ushenko attempts to show, ostensibly on Mead's own terms, that the relativity of simultaneity necessarily leads to the non-Meadian conclusion that the independent existence of the space-time interval and the independent physical reality of space must be accepted. He prefers to restrict the category of sociality to the process of role-taking, and to exclude it from the realm of the physical universe.

________. The Philosophy of Relativity. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1937. Pp. 132-134.

Victoroff, David. "Les ideés esthetiques de G. H. Mead." Revue d'Esthétique, II (April-June, 1949), 142-150.

________. "La notion d'émergence et la catégorie du social dans la philosophie de G. H. Mead." Revue Philosophique, CXLII (1952), 555-562.

Yarros, Victor S. "Professor G. H. Mead's 'Philosophy of the Present.'" Open Court, XLVI (November, 1932), 787-791.

D. Selected Works Exhibiting a Strong Meadian Influence

Berger, Peter. The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion. Anchor Books. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1969.

________, and Luckmann, Thomas. The Social Construction of Reality. Anchor Books. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1967.

Coutu, Walter. Emergent Human Nature. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949.

Luckmann, Thomas. The Invisible Religion. New York: Macmillan Company, 1967.

Morris, Charles William. Six Theories of Mind. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932.

Mowrer, O. Hobart. The Crisis in Psychiatry and Religion. Insight Books. Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1961.

Schutz, Alfred. Collected Papers I: The Problem of Social Reality. Edited and Introduced by Maurice Natanson, with a Preface by H. L. Van Breda. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962.

________. Collected Papers II: Studies in Social Theory. Edited and Introduced by Arvid Brodersen. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964.

Shibutani, Tamotsu. Society and Personality. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1961.

Winter, Gibson. Elements for a Social Ethic. New York: Macmillan Company, 1966.